

Hafa Adai!

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\$1

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74 new cases; 1.6K recoveries

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A total of 74 new cases of COVID-19 were confirmed on Dec. 20, bringing the CNMI's total to 2,580, according to the latest news release from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. on Tuesday night.

CHCC also reported that, as of Dec. 20, there have been 1,606 recoveries, 678 active cases, and five COVID-19-related deaths of the cases that have been identified since Oct. 28.

As of Dec. 21, there are 10 who are hospitalized for COVID-19: seven who are unvaccinated and three who

See 74 on Page 4

Star Marianas back to scheduled flights

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Star Marianas Airlines Inc., has resumed its scheduled interisland service following a meeting with the CNMI administration regarding airport usage fee subsidy.

According to a statement from Star Marianas president Shaun Christian, following Star Marianas' meeting with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last Tuesday, the airline would resume scheduled flights between Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

See STAR on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:45pm, Dec. 22, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **92.5%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	36,314
Fully Vaccinated:	33,927
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,265
Fully Vaccinated:	4,832
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,407	7	19,414
Recovered	18,909	4	18,913
Active	224	7	231
Deaths	270	0	270

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	2,506	74	2,580
Traced via Travel Screening	282	3	285
Traced via Community Screening	2,224	71	2,295
Deaths	8	0	8

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

2 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS IN PARADISE

A family tries to sit on the giant Adirondack chair that's on loan from Surf Club restaurant and is part of the Christmas display at the Office of the Governor building on Capital Hill, which features this tropical-themed display. The lights display also features other Christmas decorations like a Santa Claus in a Hawaiian shirt, snowmen made of car tires, Santa Claus with his reindeers and a Christmas house that honor the men and women of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

BEA CABRERA

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Omicron casts a new shadow over economy's pandemic recovery

By PAUL WISEMAN and
ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP BUSINESS WRITERS

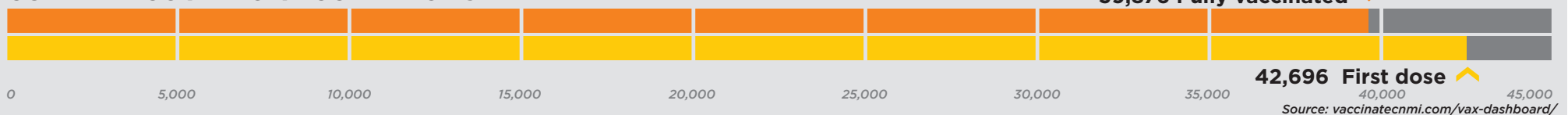
Just as Americans and Europeans were eagerly awaiting their most normal holiday season in a couple of years, the omicron variant has unleashed a fresh round of fear and uncertainty—for travelers, shoppers, party-goers and their economies as a whole.

The Rockettes have canceled their Christmas show in New York. Some London restaurants have emptied out as commuters avoid the downtown. Broadway shows are canceling some performances. The National Hockey League

suspended its games until after Christmas. Boston plans to require diners, revelers and shoppers to show proof of vaccination to enter restaurants, bars and stores.

See OMICRON on Page 4

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



INSIDE



NATION

U.S. health officials say 2021 is shaping up to be even deadlier than last year.

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ASIA

The Bohol governor pleads for the government to quickly send food and other aid.

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ENVIRONMENT

In a step to fight climate change, the Biden administration is raising vehicle mileage standards.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

‘Possible vaxx card verification among items being mulled’

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force is in talks right now with the Torres administration about possibly releasing a directive regarding businesses verifying the COVID-19 vaccination of its customers.

During an appearance during Gov. Ralph DLG Torres’ radio news briefing Tuesday, task force chair Warren F. Villagomez gave updates on the task force’s ongoing efforts and part of efforts include discussions with Torres about requiring vaccination cards for entry to some businesses.

“We see that [it] is important to continue to put out efforts [that make] sure that we’re not mixing communities that are not vaccinated or not complying with our measures...to safeguard our community,” he said.

Villagomez also briefly addressed the passing of a task force member in a utility task vehicle that occurred earlier this month at the quarantine site at the former Marianas Resort, describing the ordeal as a “sensitive matter.” He as-

sured that measures have been put in place to ensure that such an incident does not recur.

“That is a sensitive matter...and we had implemented corrective actions [to ensure] that an incident like this does not happen [again],” he said.

Part of these corrective actions include having more higher-ranking task force personnel on the site to ensure that all other personnel are adhering to quarantine site policies and procedures.

Villagomez explained that the task force and the Department of Homeland Security oversee the daily operations of all government quarantine sites and the different aspects related to the sites, including transportation and security.

Giving updates on active government sites, Villagomez said the Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan site, and the site at the former Marianas Resort are active. The PIC and Kanoa sites are “full-on isolation and quarantine sites for COVID-positives,” Villagomez said, and the former Marianas Resort site is for incoming travelers that did not meet certain travel

protocol requirements.

In other updates, Villagomez said that the task force, the Department of Public Safety,

and the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services will be supporting the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.’s

COVID-19 Community Center at the Koblerville Youth Center, and that there have not been any positive cases

of COVID-19 on Tinian and Rota as of late. Task force personnel remain on standby on both islands however, he said.

GCA’s Kimura is selected as Questbridge scholar



Grace Christian Academy senior Miku Kimura has been awarded a full four-year scholarship to Wesleyan University in Connecticut as a Questbridge scholar.

“Honestly, I was not expecting to receive the honor of becoming a Questbridge finalist. However, I am thankful for this recognition, and this experience will surely assist me as I embark on my college journey,” Kimura said when asked about this latest accomplishment.

The Questbridge National College Match Scholarship is a national program that connects high achieving high school seniors with full scholarships to the nation’s top colleges/universities.

Grace Christian Academy senior Miku Kimura is awarded a full four-year scholarship to Wesleyan University in Connecticut as a Questbridge scholar. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The National College Match is a highly competitive process drawing applications from impressive students across the country. As noted by Questbridge itself, “The qualifications of this year’s applicants were very strong.” In 2021, out of over 16,500 applications, 6,312 students were selected as National College Match Finalists. This year’s Match Scholarship Recipients came from 49 states, as well as the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico.

GCA congratulates Kimura for being a Questbridge recipient. “Miku has worked hard over the years and is well-deserving of this honor. We look forward to all that God has ahead for her,” said GCA principal Beth Nunez.

The entire GCA community wishes to congratulate Kimura and express pride in this wonderful accomplishment. (PR)



How to gather safely during the holidays



GET VACCINATED!



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MVA aids first flights from Busan since March 2020

The first flights from Busan, Korea, to the Marianas since March 2020 at the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic are being supported by Marianas Visitors Authority in its continuing work to rebuild the local tourism economy.

Three flights by Jeju Air will arrive on Saipan on Dec. 29, 2021, and Jan. 5 and Jan. 12, 2022.

"With the welcomed restoration of jobs at hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies, as well as increased government and business revenue we have seen since flights resumed from Seoul in July, we are now working with our industry partners to try to reopen Busan," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "December and January are a key holiday period, so this is an ideal time to attract more visitors, especially those interested in golfing during the winter season."

The first flight will include 30 media and travel agency representatives, whose firsthand experience in the Marianas on the familiarization tour will help them publicize and sell the destination to other travelers from the Busan area. Approximately 500 total visitors are expected on the three flights, which are being organized by Micronesia Resort Inc., which owns Kensington Hotel Saipan, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, and Coral Ocean Resort.

"The Marianas has several advantages working in our favor, including our travel bubble agreement and our current exemption from the 10-day quarantine that all other travelers to Korea must undergo. This makes us a prime choice for travel," said Iakopo. "At the same time, we are closely monitoring the impact of the omicron variant on bookings to the Marianas and continuing to strategize on how best to deal with any necessary changes locally or in Korea caused by COVID."

Energy Division temporarily suspends energy programs

The CNMI Energy Division Office is informing the public that implementation of program services measures for the Weatherization Assistance Program, the State Energy Program, and the Energy Efficient, Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program are temporarily suspended for a period of 30 days or until further notice. More information and updates on program services will be announced later. The office will remain open to entertain applications or questions regarding the program. For additional information or questions, call (670) 664-4480/1. (PR)

Under the Tourism Re-sumption Investment Plan, the MVA and its tourism partners reopened the Seoul, Korea, market in July with three weekly flights operated

by Asiana Airlines, Jeju Air, and T'Way. The airlines are awaiting approval from the South Korea government to

add flights to Saipan in January 2022, which would bring approximately 5,000 visitors per month. (PR)

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TURBO



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KBB: \$23,606

2019 HYUNDAI
KONA SPORT



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48,475 MILES
KBB: \$22,582

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MAZDA6 SPORT



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STK: 16R269
KBB: \$14,450

2017 MAZDA
MAZDA3
SPORT



SALE PRICE
\$18,995 | 38,500 MILES
STK: 21D019C
KBB: \$19,253

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SPORT



SALE PRICE
\$27,995 | 70,502 MILES
STK: 5P279
KBB: \$32,299

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RTL-E-AWD



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\$43,995 | 34,455 MILES
STK: 19P367
KBB: \$47,459

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FORTE HATCHBACK



SALE PRICE
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STK: 18HS950
KBB: \$14,995

2013 FORD
F-150
STX 2WD



SALE PRICE
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STK: 15P354A

2019 MAZDA
MAZDA6 GT



SALE PRICE
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STK: 22M021A
KBB: \$29,936

2017 JEEP
WRANGLER
SPORT 4WD



SALE PRICE
\$45,995 | 28,265 MILES
STK: 17P347

2018 KIA
FORTE LX



SALE PRICE
\$17,995 | 15,501 MILES
STK: 18HS922
KBB: \$18,632

2020 HYUNDAI
VENUE



SALE PRICE
\$18,995 | 8,383 MILES
STK: 21D082A
KBB: \$21,071

2017 TOYOTA
TACOMA SR5 2WD



SALE PRICE
\$28,995 | 52,267 MILES
STK: 17P362

2018 JEEP
WRANGLER
SPORT 4WD



SALE PRICE
\$45,995 | 26,205 MILES
STK: 18P345

2018 MAZDA
MAZDA3
SPORT



SALE PRICE
\$17,995 | 11,682 MILES
STK: 8HS885
KBB: \$19,053

2017 HYUNDAI
TUCSON GL



SALE PRICE
\$18,995 | 62,261 MILES
STK: 17P365
KBB: \$19,752

2013 TOYOTA
FJ CRUISER
4WD



SALE PRICE
\$37,995 | 85,000 MILES
STK: 13P359

2019 JEEP
WRANGLER
SPORT 4WD



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\$54,995 | 34,593 MILES
STK: 19P349

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Sablan not recusing self from Impeachment Committee

» Says she will vote for Torres' impeachment

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan), who is the NMI Democratic Party's candidate for governor in the November 2022 gubernatorial election, made it clear yesterday that she is not going to recuse herself from the Special Investigating Committee on Impeachment and that she will vote "yes" for the impeachment of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* request for comments, Sablan said Torres does not get to dictate the terms of his own investigation and impeachment.

Sablan said if it were up to Torres, based on the "criteria" he has set for the composition of the impeachment committee, 15 of the 20 sitting members of the House of Representatives would be disqualified and the Special Committee on Impeachment would consist entirely of his political allies remaining in the House.

"My position is already known and very clear: I support impeachment. I signed that resolution. I will vote yes when it comes to the floor," she said.



Sablan

Gilbert Birnbrich, who is the counsel for the Office of the Governor, requested House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) on Tuesday not to include Sablan in the impeachment committee since she has already announced her intent to run as governor.

Birnbrich said the committee should also not include representatives who have previously expressed an opinion on the guilt of Torres as alleged in the impeachment resolution.

Birnbrich said it would also be unseemly for the committee to have any members who are themselves accused of criminal activities.

At a radio press briefing Monday, Torres said Sablan should not be included in the committee because she is running for governor and so has a motive to make sure

that she tries everything she can to remove him because that's one less opponent for her.

Sablan is also a member of the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, which is investigating Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels.

Despite Birnbrich's request, Villagomez went ahead and appointed Sablan to the nine-member impeach-

ment committee.

Sablan said yesterday that her position is based on two years of extensive review of thousands of pages of the governor's records of expenditures, and hours upon hours of hearings with witnesses who testified under oath that led her to conclude that Torres has abused his powers as governor and that these abuses rise to the level of impeachment.

"Impeachment is a remedy provided in the Constitution for the Legislature to hold the governor accountable for abuses of power," she said.

The lawmaker said she has considered the facts, the evidence, the guidance of the CNMI Constitution and their duties and responsibilities as legislators, to reach her conclusion.

She said all other representatives will be called upon to do the same.

Sablan said she reached her position on impeachment long before she agreed to accept the Democratic Party's nomination for her as candidate for governor.

She said she will not recuse from participating in the Special Investigating Committee on Impeachment or voting in this process.

Sablan said upon consulting with a legal counsel, it is clear that nothing in the rules or the law would require recusal of any member merely because they are running for governor

or lieutenant governor.

"Again, we are legislators, we have a job to do, and part of that job is providing checks and balances and holding the executive accountable for misconduct and abuses of power," she said.

STAR

From Page 1

Effective yesterday, Star Marianas' scheduled flights between Saipan and Tinian have resumed.

Meanwhile, scheduled flights between Saipan and Rota will resume today, Dec. 23.

For the updated flight schedules, visit the Star Marianas website at <https://www.starmarianasair.com/passenger-flights>. For reservations, contact the airline's reservations office at (670) 433-9996/9997/9998 between 8am and 6pm daily.

In a previous letter to Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberly King-Hinds, Christian said that Star Marianas opted to undertake discussions about subsidies directly with the Office of the Governor since the CPA has indicated that it has no discretion in terms of abating the fees and charges.

"It seems appropriate that Star Marianas undertake the discussions about subsidies directly with the Office of the Governor. As such, the subsidies and airfare prices should not present an obstacle to the continued cooperation between Star Marianas and the CPA," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* ar-

Sablan said the same has held true at the federal level as members of the U.S. Congress running for president at the time still participated and voted in presidential impeachment cases, and they were very vocal and open about their positions.

chives, Star Marianas Air returned to operations last Dec. 10, providing organized charters between all the islands.

Christian explained that the state of emergency Torres issued over two weeks ago left Star Marianas under the impression that all CPA imposed fees have been suspended. This was their main condition to CPA for them to resume interisland travel.

From here, Christian stated, they are just waiting for a go-signal from the U.S. Department of Transportation to allow them to resume regular flight service.

For their part, King-Hinds reached out to the DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg to ask the department to make federal subsidy available to the CNMI through various programs offered by the DOT, including the Essential Air Service Program, the Alternative Essential Air Service Program, and the Small Community Air Service Development Program.

King-Hinds said the hope is that, by being designated as an EAS-eligible community, the CNMI will be able to establish affordable and reliable interisland air travel through subsidizing commuter and certificated air carriers to serve the Rota and Tinian airports.

OMICRON

From Page 1

A heightened sense of anxiety has begun to erode the willingness of some people and some businesses to carry on as usual in the face of the extraordinarily contagious omicron variant, which has fast become the dominant version of the virus in the United States.

Other people are still traveling, spending and congregating as they normally do, though often with more caution. Holiday air travel remains robust. Many stores and restaurants are still enjoying solid sales. And omicron has yet to keep audiences away from movie theaters in significant numbers. This past weekend, record audiences across all demographics flocked to theaters for the new "Spider-Man" movie.

"The movie theater has not yet been hindered by omicron," said Steve Buck, the chief strategy officer of EntTelligence.

At the same time, no one knows yet what omicron will ultimately mean for the health of the Western economies, which have endured a wild ride of downturns and recoveries since early 2020.

"These mutations keep coming," said Robin Brooks, chief economist at the Institute of International Finance. "What is the probability that sometime we get a really nasty one? No one has any idea. This thing is mutating, and it's very, very hard to say."

Will omicron cause outbreaks at factories and ports, disrupt operations and worsen supply chain bottlenecks that have forced up prices and con-

tributed to the hottest U.S. inflation in decades?

Will it mean people will hunker down at home again and spend less on services—restaurant meals, concerts, hotel stays—which could weaken the economy but potentially defuse inflationary pressures?

Will return-to-office plans for white collar workers be put on hold indefinitely, deepening the hit to many cities' downtown businesses?

Or will omicron prove a blip that scarcely slows what has become a surprisingly strong recovery from the short but intense pandemic recession?

Spooked by uncertainty and fear of the worst-case scenarios, stock markets around the world sold off for three days before rebounding Tuesday.

"We don't know whether this is good or bad for growth or inflation in the medium term," said Megan Greene, global chief economist at the Kroll Institute. "We just don't have enough data yet."

Unable to assess its longer-term consequences, businesses, consumers and policymakers have struggled to respond to the omicron threat.

Danielle Ballantyne, a Chicago dietitian, had planned to visit some stores and seek inspiration for holiday gifts. But as omicron spread, she scrapped that idea in favor of staying home and shopping online.

"From what I have been hearing in the news," Ballantyne said, "omicron is more contagious. So I am trying to be more selective in where I go in terms of big public spaces."

At its stores in big cities like New York and Chicago, the clothier Un-tuckit is reporting a 15% drop in traffic, similar to what it experienced when the delta variant started spread-

ing last summer.

"It impacts people's perception of comfort and safety and their willingness to go out," said Aaron Sanandres, CEO of the company.

As infections have spread, European countries have so far gone further than the United States, with restrictions ranging from a full lockdown in the Netherlands to indoor mask mandates in the United Kingdom.

A theater in western England refunded \$240,000 in tickets. The Advantage Travel Group, which represents U.K. travel agents, said that business—flights, cruises and package holidays—plummeted fell 40% in mid-December from a month earlier. A diner in central Madrid absorbed cancellations for about half its booked space one week recently.

In London, downtown restaurants are suffering as office workers stay home.

"As soon as they said work from home, it's completely emptied," said Sally Abe, a chef at the Conrad Hotel in central London.

On Tuesday, Britain announced that it would provide 1 billion pounds (\$1.3 billion) in grants and other aid to help the hospitality industry survive omicron. The government bowed to pressure from pubs, restaurants and other businesses whose income has plunged in the aftermath of public health warnings.

Since the pandemic hit nearly two years ago, it has imposed one economic challenge after another. Economies all but shut down when the virus struck early last year. More than 22 million people in the United States alone lost jobs. Bars, restaurants and hotels were particularly devastated.

74

From Page 1

are vaccinated. Two of the 10 are on ventilators.

The CNMI's vaccination rate now stands at 92.5% as of 6:48pm yesterday.

Of the 74 new cases, 29 were found through contact tracing, 42 through community testing, and three through travel testing. The vaccination statuses of the 74 were pending verification as of Tuesday night, said CHCC.

CHCC reported a total of 487 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 21, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 92.2%. Registering for COVID-19 vaccines can be done at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

CHCC also reported that a total of 475 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Dec. 20, comprising travel and surveillance testing, not including the testing numbers from the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services' antigen COVID-19 testing. Registering for community-based testing can be done at <https://covid-testing.chcc.health/>.

DOC situation

Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren F. Villagomez said the task force has been coordinating with the Department of Corrections about the COVID-19 cases that were identified at DOC.

In a guest appearance during Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' radio news briefing on Tuesday, Villagomez said the task force has recommended to DOC to move infected individuals away from infected sites at DOC and move them to sterile sites. Villagomez further recommended that DOC perform full evaluations to ensure that non-infected individuals within DOC do not come in contact with infected individuals. The goal, he said, is to contain the cases and keep the DOC general population safe.

Villagomez said that Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez has since set up two dome tents at DOC that will serve as a screening site for all arrestees, potential detainees, and inmates showing COVID-19-like or flu-like symptoms.

For more proactive measures, Warren Villagomez said that the Corrections commissioner asked for on-site health care providers at DOC to conduct daily health checks on individuals inside DOC and added that air scrubbers and high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filters have been installed on the premises to ensure proper ventilation.

During a House of Representatives session earlier this week, vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) disclosed to fellow lawmakers DOC's ongoing situation. Blas said that several Corrections officers and inmates had tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in a severe manpower shortage at DOC.



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House passes resolutions honoring Kara, Arago

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives adopted Monday a House resolution to honor and commend the late former CNMI attorney general Maya Kara for her dedication and selfless contributions to the CNMI.

At the same session, the House adopted a House commemorative resolution and a Senate joint resolution to commend the life and countless contributions to the CNMI of the late Glicerio "Eli" Del Mundo Arago, the honorary consul of the Philippines in the CNMI and publisher of *Saipan Tribune*.

House Resolution 22-13, authored by Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), also extends the House's condolences to Kara's bereaved family on her untimely passing.

Kara passed away at her

home on Capital Hill last Nov. 19 after a long battle with cancer. She was 76.

Demapan's resolution noted that Kara served in various roles and positions in both private practice and public sectors throughout the practice of her legal profession and played an integral role in the earlier phases of the Commonwealth as well as present clients in her own private practice.

"This august body is honored and privileged to commend the life of such a remarkable individual who has deeply and positively impacted our Commonwealth," said the lawmaker in the resolution.

Kara and her husband, Bruce Mailman, moved to

Saipan on Feb. 17, 1989.

According to the resolution, from February 1989 to July 1998, Kara served as a legal counsel at the CNMI Legislative Bureau, where she served in the capacities of the legal counsel of the House during the 6th, 7th, and 8th Legislatures. She served as the chief legal counsel of the House for the 9th, 10th, and 11th Legislatures.

From February 2000 to January 2002, Kara served as the legal counsel to then-governor Pedro P. Tenorio. From February 2002 to December 2005, she served as the legal counsel to then-lieutenant governor Diego Benavente. From January 2005 to December 2005, Kara served as the administrative hearing officer for the



Kara



Arago

Admin leave OK'd starting 12pm Thursday

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has authorized the grant of administrative leave for all non-critical employees of the CNMI government on Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021, starting at 12pm "in the spirit of the holiday season."

Torres issued the directive yesterday, saying, "As Christmas day draws near, we take the opportunity to reflect upon the gifts we are most grateful for with the ones we love and cherish most. The holiday season brings forth the best of what the Commonwealth and its people have to offer, for it is time

of rejoicing with family and friends, spreading goodwill to our neighbors, and giving thanks for all our blessings, big and small.

"Although the past year has presented us with many unprecedented challenges, we remain a community committed to taking care of one another and doing our part to keep each other safe. For this reason, I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude once again, to all our doctors, nurses, first responders, COVID-19 Task Force, and government employees who have sacrificed their own

safety and wellbeing in the service of others.

"I also wish to thank each and every one of you for the cooperation and care you have shown in abiding by the directives and guidelines set forth by my office, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the [COVID-19] Task Force in response to the pandemic. I am proud to announce that as of today, we have achieved a vaccination rate of 92.5% for all eligible residents in the CNMI. This could not have been accomplished without your proactiveness, assistance, and support. (PR)

CNMI Department of Labor and from January 2005 to December 2007, she held the position of special administrative hearing counsel for the NMI Retirement Fund, where she also served as administrative hearing officer from July 2008 to around 2012.

She served as legal counsel for the CNMI's 3rd Constitutional Convention in 1995.

Since 1990 until her passing, Kara was a member of the CNMI Bar Association where she served as president and other positions.

With respect to Arago, House Commemorative Resolution 22-5, also authored by Demapan, honors and commends Arago for his numerous contributions to the CNMI.

Senate Joint Resolution 22-2, authored by Sen. Vinnie Vinson Flores Sablan (R-Saipan), also commends the life and contributions of Arago. The Senate passed the resolution last week and transmitted it to the House.

Arago, who was also senior vice president of TanHold-

ings Corp., passed away at the Guam Regional Medical City in Guam last Nov. 24. He was 69 years old.

Demapan said through his hard work and determination that he has fervently displayed throughout his life, Arago has earned the loyalty and respect of all who were privileged to have known him.

"This august body, representing the people of the CNMI, is justly proud to honor an individual who has dedicated a large portion of his life in serving our Commonwealth," the lawmaker said.

According to the resolution, Arago first came to Saipan in 1986, to join TanHoldings Corp. as a comptroller/assistant operations manager/chief accountant in internal audit, the positions he would hold until 2000. From 2000 to 2008, Arago became the corporation's vice president for Finance. From 2008 until his passing, Arago served as senior vice president and chief finance officer for TanHoldings.

From 2015 up until his passing, Arago also served as

honorary consul of the Philippines for the CNMI.

Arago's community and professional activities upon until his passing, include serving as the president and director of the TanHoldings Football Club; corporate secretary, treasurer and director of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation; member of the Society of Human Resource Management (USA); adviser and lecturer of the Mariana's Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants; past president of the Saipan Fil-American Lions Club; vice president of the Saipan Soccer School; vice president of the Stellar Marianas; and lecturer in the UCLA Guam Travel Study Program, University of Guam.

Throughout his life, Arago garnered numerous citations and awards/commendations.

He completed his college at the University of the East in Manila where he graduated cum laude in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, majoring in accounting.

CCPA creates holiday displays at NMI Museum

Right across the Sugar King Park sits a dozen carefully crafted displays created by the members of the CNMI Child-care Providers Association that celebrate the holidays and hopefully bring cheer in the community.

According to a CCPA news release yesterday, it said that its members dedicated hours of their personal time to create colorful and whimsical displays including Christmas trees, Christmas houses, gift boxes and many different lights.

CCPA members who participated in putting up dis-

plays include Green Meadow School, Pure Love Daycare, Gana Daycare, Smart Start Nurturing Center, Loving Hands Daycare, R&Q Daycare, Golden Harvest International School, and Northern Marianas International School.

"The CCPA would like to thank the parents for their continued trust, support and understanding during these last few months. Thank you as well to the Child Care Licensing Office and Evergreen Learning Center for creating the standard for quality child care in the CNMI and working patiently and diligently with

the CNMI child care centers.

"We would also like to thank the Department of Culture and Community affairs for their Child Care Development Fund that has made it possible for low-income families to access quality child care. Each and every one of these partnerships paves the future for our children's development and we cannot express our gratitude enough. We would like to wish everyone a safe and joyful holiday season that brings joy, peace, unity and prosperity to all," the association news release said. (Saipan Tribune)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RFP NO.: DPW21-RFP-42200016
SUBMISSION DATE: January 11, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Architectural and Engineering Design of Route 205 Road and Drainage Improvement, Tinian; Project No. TQ-THS-0205 (101)"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **December 09, 2021** at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **December 28, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 05, 2022** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ANTHONY A. CAMACHO
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
 P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
 Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
 Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.net

Public Notice

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 28, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance. In compliance with the CNMI COVID-19 guidelines, Face-masks must be worn, social distancing will be enforced, and not more than ten (10) people will be allowed in the conference room during the course of the meeting.

- PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
 - Call to Order
 - Roll Call
 - Adoption of Agenda
- PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
- OLD BUSINESS**
 - CDBG-DR Updates
 - HTF Updates
- NEW BUSINESS**
 - Election of Subcommittee Chairpersons
 - Amend Homeownership Policies and Procedures to Include Energy Star Appliances
 - Request to Approve HAF Policies and Procedures
 - Request to Approve EHV Policies and Procedures
 - Return and Reallocation of Credits for Palm Breeze Homes
 - Return and Reallocation of Credits for Lotus Homes and Ladera Homes
- LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT**
- EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - Personnel Matters
- OTHER MATTERS**
- ADJOURNMENT**

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairperson of the Board

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
 Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
 P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
 Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
 E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2021
Opening date: December 17, 2021 Closing date: January 07, 2022

Positions: **SAIPAN:**

- (1) Baggage Handling Systems (BHS) Technician
- (1) General Maintenance I
- (1) Ports Police Officer I

ROTA:

- (1) Maintenance/Custodial-I (CPA Rota)
- (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I

TINIAN:

- (1) General Maintenance I
- (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 7, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

'Surge of COVID-19 cases is NMI's 1st wave'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Other countries have already gone through three to five different waves in the global COVID-19 pandemic but, largely because of the CNMI's widespread and effective efforts to stem the pandemic here, it has managed to keep its numbers low and the latest surge of COVID-19 cases in the CNMI is its first wave, said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres Tuesday.

Speaking at a radio press briefing, Torres said his administration, COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez, and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muna

have done everything they can to protect the community here from the virus.

He pointed out that in the last year and a half, before the current surge, they were able to hold the positive cases to below 300 and two deaths.

"While others have gone through three, four, five waves, this is our first wave," said the governor.

Torres said the community is aware of all the things that the COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC's first responders have done to safeguard the CNMI's people. He cited the Road to



Torres

80% vaccination outreach, among other programs, that ensured the CNMI's high rate of vaccinations. Based on the 2020 Census, the CNMI should already be hitting at least 90% full vaccination, Torres said. As of yesterday, the CNMI's full vaccination rate was already at 92.2%.

He said there is nothing they can do to make it 100% vaccination to safeguard the community from the virus. The governor said they will continue, however, to make sure that everybody who is eligible to be vaccinated is vaccinated.

Court will not act on Shoiter suit vs DPS

The U.S. District Court for NMI has vacated all pending proceedings in the lawsuit filed by a Department of Corrections inmate who is suing the department for allegedly denying him adequate medical care.

According to Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, she has vacated all pending proceedings in the case of Price Shoiter.

Manglona stated in her order that she has reconsidered her disposition from the Dec. 2, status conference where she ordered the parties to return for a settlement conference on Jan. 6, 2022, and ordered that the parties submit a proposed scheduling order.

Instead, the court now finds that the appropriate procedural mechanism is to vacate the settlement conference and issue an order requiring that the parties submit a new scheduling order until either

party files a motion to either enforce the settlement or reopen proceedings.

"The court will take no further action in this closed matter until a party formally submits a motion to enforce the settlement agreement (which would be an independent claim for specific performance) or a motion to reopen the matter," she said.

The matter recently came before the court at the request of Shoiter to set a status conference regarding the intent of the defendants to proceed with the settlement agreement in this matter.

The settlement agreement was entered into in February 2021 and resolved Shoiter's Section 1983 claims and included a conditional clemency provision. However, conditional clemency has not been granted and no payment had been made to date.

For those reasons, the court vacated all pending dates and deadlines and will take no further action until a formal motion is submitted by a party or jointly by the parties.

According to court documents, Shoiter was serving a 10-year prison term for sexually abusing a 7-year-old girl when he sued Corrections officials for breaching a previous settlement agreement. He alleged that Corrections officials had continued to deny him adequate medical care.

Shoiter sought reparations for general, consequential, compensatory, and punitive damages; and a declaration that the defendants' actions violated his constitutional rights.

On Feb. 11, 2021, after receiving a notice of an agreement of dismissal from the parties, Manglona dismissed Shoiter's complaint with prejudice. *(Kimberly B. Esmores)*



ANNOUNCEMENT and PUBLIC NOTICE

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds)

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) announces the availability of a limited number of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) awarded through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for an EHV, an individual or family must meet one of four eligibility categories:

1. Experiencing homelessness;
2. At-risk of homelessness;
3. Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; OR
4. Were recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

How do I get an EHV?

The CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition will refer eligible families to NMHC for EHVs. If you are experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or experiencing any of the conditions listed above, please call any one of the following organizations to schedule an appointment to complete an assessment. NMHC will only receive applications through a direct referral process from the CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition. Applications will NOT be accepted at NMHC.

**Division of Youth Services (DYS)
& Office of Youth Affairs**
Office hours: 8 am to 4 pm
(Mon—Fri. except holidays)

Saipan: (670) 237-1017/1018 or (670) 664-2599 or (670) 285-1921
Tinian: (670) 433-9272
Rota: (670) 532-9393

Applications for appt. may be downloaded at: dcca.gov.mp or dys.gov.mp and dropped-off at: Kagman Community Center, Tanapag Youth Center, Tinian DYS Office, or Sinapalo Youth Center

Micronesian Legal Services Corp. (MLSC)
Office hours: 9 am to 12 pm
And 1 pm to 3 pm

Saipan: (670) 234-7729 or (670) 234-6243
Tinian: (670) 433-2664
Rota: (670) 284-0681 or (670) 532-0003/0004

**Northern Marianas Coalition
Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (NMCADSV)**
Office hours: 9 am to 5 pm
(Mon—Fri. except holidays)

Saipan: (670) 234-3878

**All partnering agencies will begin accepting calls for appointment on January 10th, 2022.
Due to the pandemic, face-to-face will be allowed by appointment only.**

For definitions of the four eligibility categories, please visit the NMHC website at: nmhcgov.net

EHV is a form of tenant-based rental assistance similar to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. EHV is limited to the eligible population. Certification of eligibility is required. EHV referrals are managed through a direct referral process from the CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition. Please contact one of the agencies listed above for direct referrals to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation EHV Program.



**A special thanks to the collaborative agencies involved in this program.
"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"**

Name: Yanping Huang Shindo
Address: P.O. Box 5087 CHRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 483-5054

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter) FCD CN
of Petition to Correct:) CIVIL ACTION
) NO. 21-0475
Yanping Huang Shindo)
Petitioner) **NOTICE OF
HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 21st, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 3rd day of December, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court



Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting
December 28, 2021 | 5:00 PM
Zoning Office | 2nd Floor Joeten Dandan Commercial Center
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666



SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

- Preliminary Matters**
 1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Adoption of Agenda
 4. Public Comments (*not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings*)
- Executive Session**
- New Business**
 1. Zoning Board Organization
 - i. Election of Board Officers (Jan. to Dec. 2022)
 2. CSP Farms - Conditional Use Permit No.2020-6772
 - i. Amendment to adjust approved fence setbacks
 3. Saipan Cares for Animals
 - i. Request to extend operations in As Gonno for additional 12 months
 4. Saipan Zoning Law of 2013 - Amendments
 - i. Meeting with SNILD Committee on Zoning
- Miscellaneous**
 1. Permit & Enforcement Report
 2. Administrator's Updates
- Adjournment**

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/6853007492>
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC's Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Finally, the truth comes out about birds. And wacky conspiracy movements

It turns out that birds are not real. Just check out the billboards, T-shirts, social media postings and the messages on a truth van touring the country. Birds are actually government surveillance drones that recharge themselves by perching on power lines right over our heads. That explains a lot. The fact that Twitter has a little bird as its symbol should tell people everything they need to know about the powerful forces at work.

Of course, the “pro-bird” crowd will make the typical, predictable arguments about how there’s nothing to worry about, and that these are just, well ... birds. But clued-in people know better. Wake up, America! Especially you “Cardinals” fans.

A healthy movement is afoot across the country to inject a little bit of humor into the crazed conspiracy “truther” mindset that inspired some of the insurrectionists who invaded the Capitol on Jan. 6. QAnon has finally met its match in 23-year-old Peter McIndoe, principal messenger behind the Birds Aren’t Real movement.

This viral movement underscores how easy it is to create conspiracy theories out of something as stupid as the existence of birds. Just as Stephen Colbert stayed in character for 11 seasons as a crazed conservative in order to poke fun at crazed conservatives on his nightly Comedy Central show, McIndoe has insisted since 2017 that his movement is genuine.

A video on his website, purportedly recorded in 1987, shows his team intensively researching to expose “the biggest crime ever perpetrated on the American people.” Since the Eisenhower administration, the U.S. government “has been committing genocide,” killing billions of birds to replace them with “sophisticated robot replicas.” A photo on his birdsarentreal.com website displays as evidence a photo of President John F. Kennedy with his hands on a Thanksgiving turkey that has a sign hanging from its neck: “Robot bird Prototype.”

McIndoe travels in a white van covered with messages exposing the truth about birds. There’s even a satellite dish on the van’s roof. He stood atop the van in July near the Gateway Arch to burn a Cardinals flag in protest of the flag’s “pro-bird” message.

McIndoe insisted in an interview on WREG-TV in Memphis that he’s not the “founder” of the movement but merely a messenger. Wearing a T-shirt that states: “Bird watching goes both ways,” he sat for a serious interview with two incredulous, unsuspecting morning show hosts. One interviewer suggested with a nervous laugh that this is “really satire” and asked what the message was with his movement. An uncomfortable silence followed. McIndoe leaned forward to state, deadpan, “Honestly, that’s kind of offensive.”

His Memphis billboard proclaiming, “Birds Aren’t Real” in giant black letters has prompted what he says is an outpouring of support from “bird truthers.” The billboards have spread to Pittsburgh and Los Angeles.

The truthers are everywhere. But then ... so are those birds. This is seriously funny stuff—for a nation that badly needs to recover its sense of humor.

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YOU BETTER WATCH OUT
YOU BETTER NOT CRY
YOU BETTER NOT POUT
I'M TELLING YOU WHY
FEAR AND DEATH
ARE COMING TO
TOWN!



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KIRK

Tell your kids that Billie Eilish says porn destroyed her brain

After her turn as host of “Saturday Night Live” last week, the pop star Billie Eilish sat down with Howard Stern on Monday for a long, intense interview on his SiriusXM radio show.

As always with Stern, talk turned to sex. And then to pornography.

The ensuing conversation generated many headlines.

Eilish, who turned 20 on Saturday, told Stern she began watching what she called “abusive pornography” when she was 11 years old. She eventually got to a point, she said, where she couldn’t watch anything else.

“Unless it was violent, I didn’t think it was attractive,” she said. “I used to be like the person who would, like, talk about porn all the time. I would be like, ‘Oh, it’s so stupid that anyone thinks that porn is bad ... I think it’s cool and it’s great.’”

One day, she said, she even complained to her mother about a friend’s mom, who would not let her child watch porn.



Eilish

“And my mom was like, ‘What?! Do you watch porn?’ And I was like, ‘How else am I supposed to learn how to have sex?’”

This is one of the saddest commentaries on adolescence that I have ever heard. The idea that a child would learn about what should be among the most joyous life experiences by watching men demean and hurt women is depressing.

When she had her first sexual relationships, she said, she emulated what she had seen and ended up doing things she did not want to do. I doubt she is alone. The proliferation of porn has warped how many young adults think about sex.

“If you’re not interested in being thrown around during sex, if you are not interested in being slapped and being choked, people are like, ‘You’re vanilla, you’re soft, you’re boring in bed,’” Eilish said. “Women are like, ‘Oh, I have to like being hurt to be thought of as good in bed.’”

By **ROBIN ABCARIAN**
Los Angeles Times



Her habit came with a cost; porn was so unsettling to Eilish that she said she developed sleep paralysis, night terrors and nightmares. That doesn’t surprise me. No one, especially a child, can unsee images of sexual degradation or violence.

“I feel incredibly devastated that I was exposed to so much porn,” she said. “I think it really destroyed my brain.”

I take her point, but her brain seems just fine. After all, she has been called the most important pop star of her generation. She has been lauded for what Vogue has called her “total lack of sexualization in her aesthetic and emotionally intelligent lyrics.”

In a world where female pop stars sexualize themselves to the point of parody, she mostly refuses to play along, the occasional magazine spread notwithstanding. Her oddball fashion style — oversized pants and tops — has been a frequent subject of discussion. She says, simply, that her clothes are shapeless because she doesn’t want people to judge her or sexualize her. Perhaps this defense mechanism stems from her exposure to the unreal, plasticized female bodies that are a feature of so many porn videos.

“I never want the world to know everything about me. I mean, that’s why I wear big, baggy clothes,” she says in a recent commercial for Calvin Klein. Nobody can have an opinion about her body, she says, “because they haven’t seen what’s underneath.” (Irony alert: Yes, that is the same Calvin Klein who sexualized a 15-year-old Brooke Shields when he put her in a pair of skin-tight jeans in 1980. “You wanna know what comes between me and my Calvins?” she coos. “Nothing.”)

Here is another irony: At the very moment porn has become so easy to access or stumble upon —and some are using it instructionally —fewer adolescents than ever are receiving formal sex education.

Planned Parenthood reports that “the vast majority” of parents support sex ed in middle and high school, and yet, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fewer than half of high schools and only a fifth of middle schools teach comprehensive sex education, which includes information about birth

See TELL on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The IOC is a craven handmaid of Beijing

It should be a rule of thumb that the Olympic Games shouldn't be held in countries that operate concentration camps.

If this strikes you as a reasonable demand, you aren't suited to serve on the International Olympic Committee. The IOC has doggedly defended Beijing as the host of the 2022 Winter Olympics even as the Chinese Communist Party pursues its campaign of unrelenting barbarity against the Uyghurs.

The Biden administration just announced a so-called diplomatic boycott of the games, a gesture of disapproval that won't dent the propaganda coup the IOC is handing the most dangerous regime in the world.

The IOC is the World Health Organization of sports. When China disappeared female tennis star Peng Shuai for the offense of making an accusation of sexual assault against a former high government official, the IOC happily assisted in the regime's crisis PR, lest the shocking incident derail the games.

The president of the IOC, Thomas Bach, had a video call with Peng where she said all was well and Bach pretended to take her assurances at face value. Of course, Peng wasn't free to speak her mind, but part of Bach's job now is to look the other way at China's blatant abuses.

China has the great fortune to deal with international organizations—except the Women's Tennis Association, which is sus-

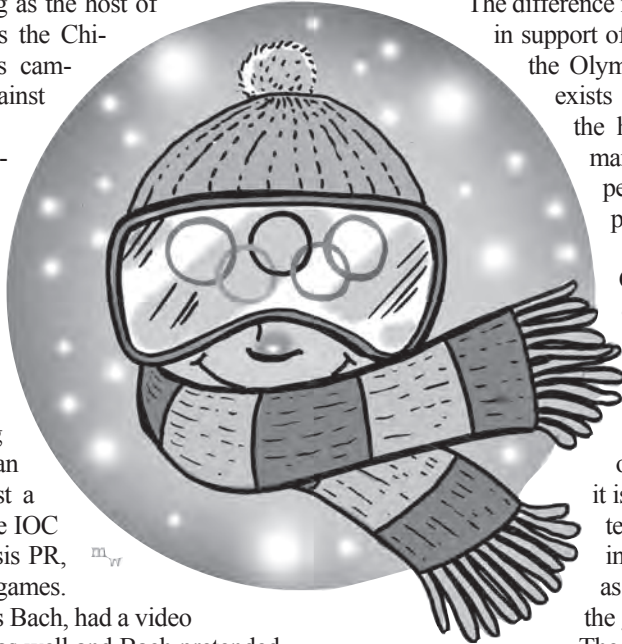
pending tournaments in China—that lack all self-respect.

The IOC is following in the well-trod footsteps of corporations, financiers and sports leagues that start out wanting to do business with China and end up complicit in the regime's crimes by staying silent or explaining them away.

The difference is that the IOC claims to be acting in support of high ideals. Bach likes to quote the Olympic charter that says Olympism exists “to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.”

Placing sport at the service of China does the opposite on all counts. China's autocrat, Xi Jinping, has been open about the political importance of the Olympics, “Hosting an excellent 2022 Games is a major task of the Party and the country, and it is a solemn commitment to the international community.” Here, the interests of the CCP and the IOC—as well as the corporate sponsors of the games—coincide.

The last time China hosted the Olympics, the Summer Games in 2008, it used the opening ceremony to stage a gigantic and memorable regime-enhancing spectacle. Beijing promised reforms to get awarded the games and then, true to form, engaged in yet more heavy-handed repression.



The perfect Christmas gift? Cash

If you still haven't gotten a holiday gift for someone—or anyone over the age of 12, for that matter—you've come to the right place. As an economist, I can assure you that not only have you done the responsible, even thoughtful, thing. It may also not be too late to make the right decision.

Every holiday season, people ask me how much to spend on gifts. The most important question is what is a gift and how much is it worth.

Often, what we buy is all wrong, blowing holes through personal budgets. People generally spend more on gifts than expected. The average yearly cost is \$650, without making anyone much happier. People give expensive gifts to partners who break up with them, and worse.

At Christmas, one out of five people go into debt. Publishers tell me January is a great time to sell financial advice books—people are chastened by their overspending and a little scared.

Almost always, the gift is worth less to the recipient than what the giver paid. We all know Sam would sell the \$25 mug you gave him for less—estimates are 10%-30% less—producing a “deadweight loss” of \$8. When you add up all those deadweight mugs, earrings, games, sweaters and other unwanted, regifted or discarded gifts, I estimate total American deadweight loss at Christmas could be about \$170 per person, or \$32 billion.

Every year finds us seeking a solution to deadweight: white elephant parties; \$20 limits; couples pledging “no gifts this year, honey”; and charities instead of gifts. Or we contemplate a thoughtful homemade gift. But we chicken out. We still click on Amazon and rush the malls with a frenzy in the countdown to Christmas.

Thus, while it may sound dreary, the green-eyeshaded econo-

mist says the most efficient gift is just plain old cash. If you want to share some feelings, make your own cards, since \$5 cards are probably \$4.50 deadweight.

Despite the advice to spend less on gifts because they aren't worth that much, this time of year economists take a back seat—we're in the anthropologists' and sociologists' lane. That's because presents are really about something else. They are often the first step in building a social relationship. And when gifts are refused or unreciprocated, relationships break. Also they are pure commodity exchanges. They aren't gifts at all.

In one of the many how-to advice columns about gifting etiquette—what to give whom and how much—it is clear that presents are a social expectation, giving something to get something; it's about as close to an exchange of money for services you'll find.

Sociologist Theodore Caplow studied Christmas gift-giving in Muncie, Indiana, in the late 1970s, collecting data on 366 Christmas gatherings and 4,347 individual gifts. Gifting was revealed to be a rigid ritual, not the voluntary, spontaneous exchange people insisted it was. Participants gave one present each to their mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, and to each of these people's spouses. A person was expected to give something to their own spouse. Participants expected to receive at least one gift in return from each of these persons. And that was more than 40 years ago, before the flood of cheap imports and Amazon made gift-giving easier.

To help afford all this, the finance site Bankrate suggests working more to alleviate the stress of the holidays, but that sounds like more stress to me.

This year JP Morgan has reported that spending will be down,

suggest you check out her TikTok feed once in a while.

“I love TikTok, it brings me joy, it's fun,” Eilish told Stern. But she is distressed by what she sees as “hyper-sexualization” on the platform.

“It's horrible to me. People think it's a kid's app,” she said, but some of the content “is literally porn. That would traumatize me if I was a kid.”

In 2017, the journal *Pediatrics* published an article called “Sexual Media and Childhood Well-being and Health.” Its authors cited studies that found that 42% of all American 10- to 17-year-olds have seen pornography online.

By **RICH LOWRY**

(c) 2021 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



If the 2008 Beijing Games were ill-advised, next year's Winter Olympics are a complete travesty. The atrocities in Xinjiang province are a matter of public record and the quashing of Hong Kong proceeds apace. No one who crosses the regime is safe from imprisonment or worse. China openly menaces Taiwan with an invasion. Indeed, China could conceivably be in a shooting war with the United States within a year or two of using the presence of our athletes, among others, to enhance the rule of its dictator-for-life.

Bach insists that the IOC must always be politically neutral. As Michael Mazza of the American Enterprise Institute points out, though, the IOC banned apartheid-era South Africa from the games. There is no such thing as neutrality when dealing with an all-encompassing police state for which politics is a life-or-death matter. The games aren't being hosted by Switzerland or Norway—nice, law-abiding countries with good ski slopes—but a revanchist power that tramples on human dignity and is a clear and present danger to international peace.

The IOC could have taken an off-ramp from these games at any point. Instead, its attitude is going to be, “Enjoy the snowboarding, never mind the concentration camps.”

By **TERESA GHILARDUCCI**

Bloomberg Opinion

Teresa Ghilarducci is the Schwartz Professor of Economics at the New School for Social Research. She's the co-author of Rescuing Retirement and a member of the board of directors of the Economic Policy Institute.



mainly on airfare and lodging, likely because of the fear of the omicron variant, but also on retail purchases, partly because of worries about inflation.

But relationships strained by pandemic-induced distance and overall price increases almost doom us to spend more than we want. The consulting group PNC computes the cost of Christmas index, comparing the prices of “Six Geese a Laying” and “Seven Swans-a-Swimming” and so on from year to year. It's up 5.7% since 2019. The Internet may make cost comparisons of the choices efficient, but it's also easier to spend more than you want due to impulse buying and rising shipping costs.

Do I take my own advice? One of my favorite birthday cards shows a wise Buddhist monk opening a gift box tied with a big ribbon. Open the card and you see an illustration of an empty gift box. The monk says, “Just what I always wanted, nothing.” The irony makes me chuckle because no one ever thinks that way.

I bought 10 of those cards at \$4.95 each, and I've given them away over the years with a nice big birthday present. I'm no dummy—I value my social relationships (almost) more than my money.

Other researchers have found that “sexting behaviors” were “significantly associated with the consumption of pornography” among a group of 329 adolescents whose mean age was just under 17.

Eilish deeply regrets her exposure to so much unhealthy sexual behavior, and the effects it had on her own relationships.

“I am so angry at myself for thinking it was OK,” she told Stern.

I think she has done us a favor with her candor. I mean, how often does a teachable moment about porn present itself?

Your kids know who Billie Eilish is. They probably admire her. Don't let her valuable lesson go to waste.






TELL

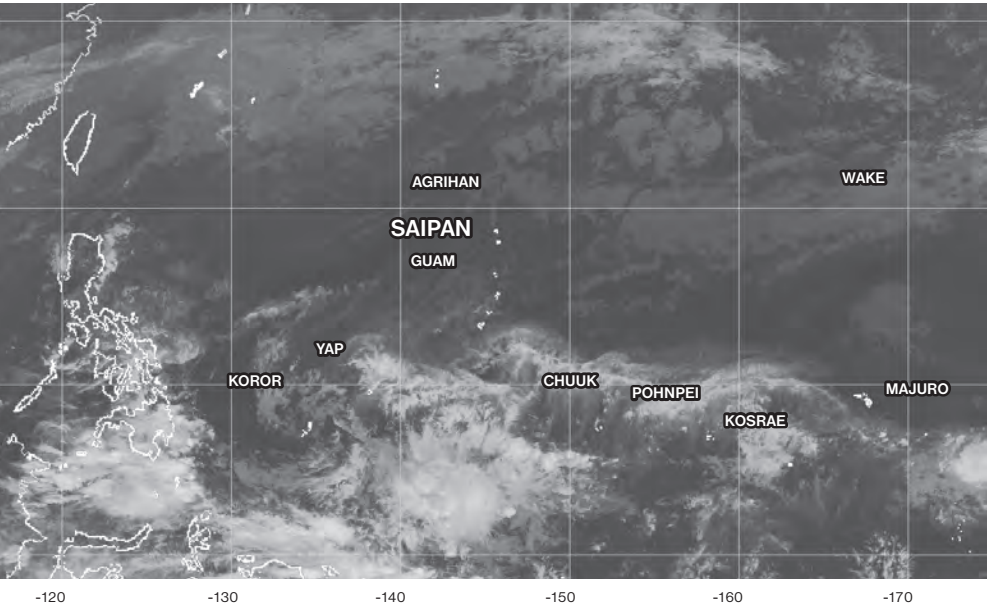
From Page 8

control and sexually transmitted diseases, and what the CDC calls “critical communication and decision-making skills.”

That's pretty depressing when you consider the barrage of sexualized content coming at kids from such sites as the hugely popular TikTok. In 2021, 63% of American kids between the ages of 12 and 17 used TikTok on a weekly basis. If you want to know where your middle-schooler learned to twerk like a pro, I

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Breezy. Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	
86°	75°	87°	76°	85°	75°	85°	75°	85°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery shows a few showers crossing the Marianas, with mostly cloudy skies continuing due to increased upper-level cloud cover. The Ipan buoy shows seas just under 5 feet with a water temperature of 84 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.


Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor



onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Showers	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Showers	86° / 79°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:39 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	5:53 PM
Sunday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Monday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	9:42 AM	9:18 PM
Friday	-	10:25 AM	10:10 PM
Saturday	-	11:05 AM	11:02 PM
Sunday	-	11:44 AM	11:53 PM
Monday	-	12:22 PM	-

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

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Business

Leadership succession at BOH Commercial Banking

HONOLULU, Hawaii—Bank of Hawaii announces the following leadership succession plans in its Commercial Banking Division.

After a 45-year career at Bank of Hawaii, vice chair and chief commercial officer Wayne Y. Hamano will retire on Jan. 13, 2022. Hamano first joined the bank as a commercial credit analyst and went on to lead various businesses in the bank, including the Commercial Banking Group, and has been a member of Bank of Hawaii's Executive Committee since 2006.

"Wayne's depth of experience and strong ties to the community have made countless contributions to the success of our business clients over the years. He will always be a part of our Bank of Hawaii 'ohana, and we are deeply grateful for his leadership and commitment to building partnerships across the state," said Bank of Hawaii chairman, president and CEO Peter Ho.

In advance of Hamano's retirement, Bank of Hawaii announces the following appointments and promotions:



Yoshizawa

Vice chair James C. Polk has been promoted to chief banking officer. With 32 years of experience in the financial services industry and more than 20 years at Bank of Hawaii, Polk has held a variety of leadership roles, including overseeing the bank's Commercial Banking Group, Retail Lending and Deposit Products, and most recently, Trust Services and Bankoh Investment Services Inc. Polk is a member of the bank's Executive Committee.

In this new role, Polk will oversee Commercial Banking, in addition to his current



Churchill

responsibilities of the bank's Trust Services Group, Cash Management, Merchant Services and Corporate Facilities.

Polk currently serves on the board of directors for Hawaii Medical Service Association and After-School All-Stars Hawaii, and is a trustee for Hawaii Pacific University.

Polk earned his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Michigan and is a graduate of Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program, as well as a graduate of the Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington.

Guy C. Churchill and Dirk K. Yoshizawa have both been promoted to senior executive vice president and co-lead executives of Bank of Hawaii's Commercial Banking Group. Churchill and Yoshizawa will report to Polk, and as members of the bank's Operating Committee, share in the responsibility of overseeing the various departments within Commercial Banking.



Polk

Churchill will continue to oversee Corporate Banking, Commercial Real Estate, Guam Commercial Banking, and will assume expanded responsibility for Commercial Deposit Management/Financial Services and International Commercial.

Churchill joined the bank in October 2017 as executive vice president and commercial real estate lending division manager. With his expertise and collaborative leadership style, he helped to broaden the bank's Commercial Real Estate Loan Division by identifying and developing affordable housing business opportunities. In 2018, his role was expanded to include leading the bank's Large Commercial Banking segment. In addition, Churchill has been instrumental in building out and leading the bank's Sustainable Finance Group, which is focused on both renewable energy projects as well as affordable housing in Hawaii and the



Hamano

West Pacific region.

Since 2019, Churchill has served on the Aloha United Way board of directors and is its incoming treasurer for 2022. He is also treasurer for Hawaii Nature Center, recently joined the board of directors for Move Oahu Forward, and serves on the Managing Committee of the Urban Land Institute Hawaii.

Prior to joining the bank, Churchill was SVP and team lead at Wells Fargo from 2007 to 2017, managing its commercial real estate office in Honolulu. Churchill earned his bachelor of science degree in leadership and organizational development from Vanderbilt University after graduating from Punahou School, and a master of business administration in finance from the University of Southern California.

Yoshizawa will continue his oversight of the bank's four state of Hawaii Commercial Banking Centers, the Fast Track Loan team, Auto

Dealer Finance, and Equipment Leasing. Yoshizawa will assume the added responsibility of Commercial Banking Service & Support and the Business Planning & Strategy team.

Yoshizawa joined Bank of Hawaii in 1995 as a bank associate. He was promoted to senior vice president in 2012, managing the Pearlridge Commercial Banking Center. In 2018, he was appointed executive vice president. In 2019, Yoshizawa was promoted to executive director of the bank's four Commercial Banking Centers across the state, including its commercial banking officers on Oahu, Maui, Kauai and Hawaii Island, and subsequently added oversight responsibility for Dealer Finance, Fast Track Loan team, and Equipment Leasing. Yoshizawa was also instrumental in developing and leading Bank of Hawaii's loan program supporting AOA's (Association of Apartment Owners).

Since 2012, he has served on the board of directors for the Friends of Waikiki Aquarium as co-chair. Yoshizawa also serves as vice chair on the board for the University Health Partners of Hawaii and for the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii.

Yoshizawa earned his bachelor of arts degree in economics from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, and is a Mililani High School graduate. (PR)

Staywell to begin open enrollment for CNMI Gov't Employee Personal Plan

StayWell Insurance Saipan announced yesterday the annual CNMI Government Employee Personal Plan Open Enrollment beginning Dec. 27, 2021 through Jan. 26, 2022. The enrollment period is open to all CNMI government employees who wish to apply.

The rates are as follows: Medical only starts at \$94.50/biweekly for a single, \$189.00/biweekly for employee +1 dependent and \$299.25/biweekly for employee +2 or more dependents. Medical and dental rates are at \$120.50/biweekly for a single, \$241.00/biweekly for employee +1 dependent and \$356.25/biweekly for employee +2 or more dependents.

StayWell's CNMI Government Employee Personal Plan benefit highlights include a first dollar plan, which means members are not required to pay a deductible. Members have access to a large provider network in the CNMI, Guam, Asia, and the United States. StayWell members may also receive a refund through the prefunded deductible and enjoy exclusive discounts at StayWell's Perks Partners

on Saipan and in Guam. Furthermore, dental plans are available as options.

To schedule a virtual presentation, you may contact our branch supervisor, Cathy Matsumoto, at (670) 323-4260 Ext. 2202 or email her at ccmatsumoto@staywellguam.com.

For more information, call us at 670-323-4260 or make an appointment to visit our new office on the first floor of the RJ Commercial Building in Dandan. Applications may be completed and submitted at our office Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm.

StayWell Insurance is headquartered in Maite, Guam. The insurance company, which has branches in Guam, the Philippines, and Saipan has a mission to serve its customers beyond expectation. StayWell strives to create value for its customers by building relationships within the community and provide the best quality health insurance products in the industry. Founded in 1986, StayWell has a 90-strong team that aims to be the best in the health insurance industry. (PR)

Celebrate with a premium Christmas at Kensington

To celebrate Christmas with you, Kensington Hotel Saipan is ready to welcome local customers.

Starting Dec. 24, Kensington's restaurant outlets are ready to serve you with the best fine dining experience on the island. Along with deluxe room and pools, treat yourself to a premium Christmas at Kensington.

On Christmas Eve, the hotel's East Moon restaurant, featuring its famous Peking Duck, will serve you with authentic Asian cuisine. On Christmas Day, barbecue sets are the best way to treat you and your family. And don't forget our Loria international buffet will also be available from Dec. 27. The restaurant outlets will continue to operate in rotation after the Christmas season.

Looking for more? Pick a date to stay at Kensington!



This Christmas, celebrate with Kensington Hotel Saipan to create an unforgettable premium holiday experience.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

That way you can maximize your time with us. On Dec. 24 to 25, Kensington offers exclusive Christmas room packages for residents. It includes

a Loria breakfast buffet for four (two adults and two children), early check-in, and late check-out, a Santa moment, and more!

For reservation and inquiry, call 322-3311 or follow us on social media at www.facebook.com/kensington-saipan. (PR)

Nation

2021 on track to surpass last year as nation's deadliest

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. health officials say 2021 is shaping up to be even deadlier than last year.

It's too early to say for sure, since all the death reports for November and December won't be in for many weeks. But based on available information, it seems likely 2021

will surpass last year's record number of deaths by at least 15,000, said Robert Anderson, who oversees the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's death statistics.

Last year was the most lethal in U.S. history, due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. A CDC report being released

Wednesday shows 2020 was actually even worse than the agency previously reported.

The report presents a final tally for last year of about 3.384 million U.S. deaths, about 25,000 more than a provisional count released earlier this year. Such jumps between provisional and final numbers

are common, but 2020's difference was higher than usual because of a lag in death records from some states that switched to new electronic reporting systems, Anderson said.

The CDC this week also revised its estimate of life expectancy for 2020. Life expectancy at birth that year

was 77 years, a decrease of 1.8 years from 2019. The agency previously estimated the decline at 1.5 years.

Anderson said it's likely that the nation will see more than 3.4 million deaths in 2021. Other experts said they think deaths for the year will end up either about the same as in 2020, or higher.

"It's really sad," said Ali Mokdad, a mortality statistics expert at the University of Washington.

A large reason is COVID-19, which hit the U.S. hard around March 2020 and became the nation's No. 3 cause

of death, behind heart disease and cancer.

Last year, COVID-19 was the underlying cause in about 351,000 deaths. This year, the number is already at 356,000, and the final tally could hit 370,000, Anderson said.

Experts also think the 2021 numbers will be affected by a drug overdose epidemic that is expected to—for the first time—surpass 100,000 deaths in a calendar year.

An increase in annual deaths is not unusual. The annual count rose by nearly 16,000 from 2018 to 2019—before COVID-19 appeared.



BOOSTER SHOT MANDATE

Travelers wait in line to get tested for COVID-19 at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, Monday, Dec. 20, 2021. California will require health care workers to get a booster shot of the coronavirus vaccine, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Tuesday, pledging to make sure hospitals are prepared as a new version of the disease begins to spread throughout the state.

AP

Biden pivots to home tests to confront omicron surge

WASHINGTON (AP)—Fighting the omicron variant surging through the country, President Joe Biden announced the government will provide 500 million free rapid home-testing kits, increase support for hospitals under strain and redouble vaccination and boosting efforts.

At the White House on Tuesday, Biden detailed major changes to his COVID-19 winter plan, his hand forced by the fast-spreading variant, whose properties are

not yet fully understood by scientists. Yet his message was clear that the winter holidays could be close to normal for the vaccinated while potentially dangerous for the unvaccinated.

His pleas are not political, he emphasized. He noted that former President Donald Trump has gotten his booster shot, and he said it's Americans' "patriotic duty" to

get vaccinated.

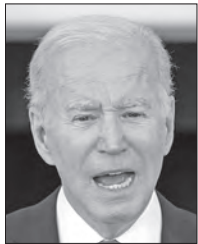
"It's the only responsible thing to do," the president said. "Omicron is serious and potentially deadly business for unvaccinated people."

Biden chastised social media and people on cable TV who have made misleading statements to discourage people from getting vaccinated.

The outbreak from this

latest strain of the coronavirus has required the federal government to get more aggressive in addressing the wave of infections, but Biden promised a weary nation that there would not be a mass lockdown of schools or businesses.

"I know you're tired, and I know you're frustrated. We all want this to be over. But we're still in it," Biden said. "We also have more tools than we had before. We're ready, we'll get through this."



Biden

US population growth at lowest rate in pandemic's 1st year

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. population growth dipped to its lowest rate since the nation's founding during the first year of the pandemic as the coronavirus curtailed immigration, delayed pregnancies and killed hundreds of thousands of U.S. residents, according to figures released Tuesday.

The United States grew by only 0.1%, with an addition-

al 392,665 added to the U.S. population from July 2020 to July 2021, bringing the nation's count to 331.8 million people, according to population estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The U.S. has been experiencing slow population growth for years but the pandemic exacerbated that trend. This past year was the first time since 1937 that the nation's population grew by less than 1 mil-

lion people.

"I was expecting low growth but nothing this low," said William Frey, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's metropolitan policy program, Brookings Metro. "It tells us that this pandemic has had a huge impact on us in all kinds of ways, and now demography."

Once there's a handle on the pandemic, the U.S. may eventually see a decrease in deaths, but population growth

likely won't bounce back to what it has been in years past because of fewer births. That will increase the need for immigration by younger workers whose taxes can support programs such as Social Security, Frey said.

"We have an aging population and that means fewer women in child-bearing ages," Frey said. "We see younger people putting off having children and they're going to have fewer children."

ACROSS THE NATION

Harvard professor found guilty of hiding ties to China

BOSTON (AP)—A Harvard University professor charged with hiding his ties to a Chinese-run recruitment program was found guilty on all counts Tuesday. Charles Lieber, 62, the former chair of Harvard's department of chemistry and chemical biology, had pleaded not guilty to two counts of filing false tax returns, two counts of making false statements, and two counts of failing to file reports for a foreign bank account in China. The jury deliberated for about two hours and 45 minutes before announcing the verdict following five days of testimony in Boston federal court. Lieber's defense attorney Marc Mukasey had argued that prosecutors lacked proof of the charges. He maintained that investigators didn't keep any record of their interviews with Lieber prior to his arrest.

Deaths of Illinois man, 2 sons deemed a triple homicide

BELVIDERE, Ill. (AP)—Police in northern Illinois are investigating the apparent shooting deaths of a man and his two young sons as a triple homicide and are searching for the man's missing vehicle. Officers found the bodies of Andrew Hintt, 31, and his two sons, 5 and 7, at their home in Belvidere on Sunday night, police said Monday. Autopsies are pending. Four shell casings were found at the scene, but no weapons have been recovered, police said. The bodies were found after the boys' mother contacted the landlord to say she had not heard from anyone in the family. The landlord called 911 and officers responded, police said. Belvidere Police Chief Shane Woody said the deaths are being investigated as a

triple homicide.

Chicago to require proof of vaccination at restaurants, bars

CHICAGO (AP)—Chicago will require proof of coronavirus vaccination at restaurants, bars, gyms and other indoor venues, as the rapidly spreading omicron variant drives a spike in COVID-19 infections, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said Tuesday. Lightfoot said the requirement will take effect Jan. 3, and will apply to places in the nation's third-largest city where food and beverages are served—including sport and entertainment venues—and fitness centers. It doesn't apply to people getting takeout, who stay in a businesses for less than 10 minutes. Lightfoot said the measure is necessary because of a surge in cases and hospitalizations, with Chicago seeing numbers at levels similar to before vaccines were available. Chicago is reporting an average of more than 1,700 new COVID cases per day, up from about 300 per day just weeks ago, she said.

De Blasio says 'No more shutdowns' as NYC faces virus spike

NEW YORK (AP)—New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said he's committed to keeping the city open as it grapples with a huge spike in coronavirus cases. The Democrat said Tuesday that New York can't see schools and businesses close again like they did when COVID-19 first hit the city in 2020. De Blasio has faced questions over the past week about whether he would reinstate closures as the omicron variant surges in the city. "Adamantly I feel this: No more shutdowns. We've been through them," de Blasio said at a virtual news conference Tuesday. "They were devastating. We can't go through it again."

Asia

Bohol governor warns of looting sans typhoon aid

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

—The governor of a central Philippine province devastated last week by Typhoon Rai pleaded on radio Tuesday for the government to quickly send food and other aid, warning that without outside help, army troops and police would have to be deployed to prevent looting because of growing hunger.

Governor Arthur Yap of Bohol province said he could no longer provide rice and other food aid after his contingency fund ran out and that many of the 1.2 million people in his island province, which remained without power and cellphone service five days after the typhoon struck, have become increasingly desperate.

The most powerful typhoon to hit the Philippine archipelago this year left at least 375 dead and more than 50 missing, mostly in the central region, including nearly 100 dead in Bohol, according to officials.

President Rodrigo Duterte visited Bohol over the weekend to see the extensive devastation. Yap said the government's social welfare department promised to send 35,000 food packs, an inadequate amount for the province's 375,000 families, but even those have not yet arrived.

In an interview on DZBB radio network, Yap thanked Duterte for visiting his province but said, "If you would not send money for food, you should send soldiers and police, because if not, looting will break out here."

Some looting mostly of small merchandise stores have occurred, Yap said, adding that the situation remained under control. But he warned that the looting could worsen if people, especially in hard-hit island municipalities, grow more desperate. People cannot withdraw money from banks without



In this photo provided by Greenpeace, residents affected by the onslaught of Typhoon Rai line up for food in San Juan, Surigao City, southern Philippines on Monday Dec. 20, 2021.

cellphone connections and power, and fuel and water shortages have also sparked long queues, he said.

The national police said widespread looting was not a problem in typhoon-ravaged regions and added that they were ready to deal with any lawlessness.

Typhoon Rai packed sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles) per hour with gusts of up to 270 kph (168 mph) at its most lethal point before blowing out into the South China Sea on Friday. At least 375 people were killed, mostly by falling trees and in flash floods, with 56 others missing and 500 injured, according to the national police. But the toll may still increase as emergency crews restore communications and power to more towns and villages.

Nearly a million people were lashed by the typhoon, including more than 400,000 who had to be moved to emergency shelters as the typhoon approached. Some have begun to return home but others either lost their houses entirely or need to do major repairs.

Emergency crews were working to restore electricity in 227 cities and towns, officials said Monday, adding

that power had been restored in only 21 areas so far. Cellphone connections have been restored in at least 106 of more than 130 cities and towns. Two local airports remained closed Monday except for emergency flights, but most others have reopened, the civil aviation agency said.

Duterte said government emergency funds have been mostly used for the coronavirus pandemic but promised to raise 2 billion pesos (\$40 million) from government agency savings to provide additional funds to typhoon-hit provinces.

The Philippines has not appealed for international help but Japan said it was sending power generators, camping tents, sleeping pads, water containers and tarpaulin roofing sheets to hard-hit regions, while China announced it was providing 20,000 food packs and rice.

About 20 tropical storms and typhoons annually batter the Philippines, which also lies along the seismically active Pacific "Ring of Fire" region, where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions frequently occur, making the Southeast Asian nation of more than 100 million people one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

ings, said it hopes to obtain approval from the Nuclear Regulation Authority to begin constructing the facilities in June and start releasing the water in April 2023.

The approval would cover the basic plan and design of the undersea tunnel, equipment to dilute the water with sea water and other necessary materials.

TEPCO plans to release

massive amounts of treated but still radioactive water into the ocean about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from the plant to ensure safety and minimize the impact on local fishing and the environment.

The contaminated water is to be diluted with large amounts of seawater to reduce the concentration of radioactive materials below allowable limits.

OK sought for nuke plant water release

TOKYO (AP)—The operator of the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant said Tuesday it has applied for approval from safety authorities to construct an undersea tunnel and other facilities needed for the planned release of large amounts of treated radioactive water into the sea.

The operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Hold-

World

'Another storm coming'

VIENNA (AP)—The World Health Organization's top official in Europe urged governments on Tuesday to prepare for a "significant surge" in coronavirus cases across the continent due to the omicron variant, which is already dominant in several countries.

"We can see another storm coming," WHO Europe regional director Dr. Hans Kluge said at a press conference in Vienna. "Within weeks, omicron will dominate in more countries of the region, pushing already stretched health systems further to the brink."

Omicron has been detected in at least 38 of the WHO European region's 53 members, Kluge added, noting that it is

already the dominant variant in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Portugal.

Last week, 27,000 people died from coronavirus in the region and an additional 2.6

million cases were reported, Kluge said. Although these cases include all variants, not just omicron, he noted this figure is 40% higher than during the same period last year.

"The sheer volume of new COVID-19 infections could lead to more hospitalizations and widespread disruption to health systems and other critical services," he said.

Thus far, Kluge said 89% of those with confirmed omicron infections in Europe reported symptoms common

with other coronavirus variants, including cough, sore throat, fever. The variant has mostly been spread by young people in their 20s and 30s in the region, he added.

Although much remains unknown about omicron, Kluge said it appears to be more infectious than previous variants, leading to "previously unseen transmission rates" in countries with a significant number of omicron cases. In those countries, cases of the variant are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days.

European governments should keep ramping up their vaccination campaigns, introduce additional measures to slow the spread of the variant, and prepare critical infrastructure like health care systems for the coming surge, Kluge said.

Putin repeats demand for guarantees

MOSCOW (AP)—The Russian president on Tuesday reiterated his demand for guarantees from the U.S.

and its allies that NATO will not expand eastwards, blaming the West for "tensions that are building up in Europe."

Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at a meeting with Russia's top military brass came just days after Moscow submitted draft security documents demanding that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's mili-

tary deployments in Central and Eastern Europe.

The demands—contained in a proposed Russia-U.S. security treaty and a

security agreement between Moscow and NATO—were drafted amid soaring tensions over a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that has

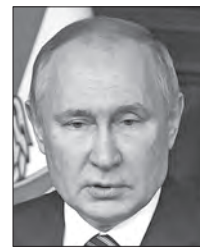
stoked fears of a possible invasion. Russia has denied it has plans to attack its neighbor but pressed for legal guarantees that would rule out NATO expansion and weapons deployment there.

Putin charged Tuesday that if U.S. and NATO missile

systems appear in Ukraine, it will take those missiles only minutes to reach Moscow.

"For us, it is the most serious challenge—a challenge to our security," he said, adding that this is why the Kremlin needs "long-term, legally binding guarantees" from the West, as opposed to "verbal assurances, words and promises" that Moscow can't trust.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington is working with its European allies to address what he called "Russian aggression" with diplomacy but said President Joe Biden opposes the kind of guarantees sought by Putin.



Putin

Dubai ruler must pay ex-wife \$700M in divorce settlement

LONDON (AP)—A British court has ordered the ruler of Dubai to pay his ex-wife and their children close to 550 million pounds (\$730 million), in one of the most expensive divorce settlements in British history.

A High Court judge said Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum must pay 251.5 million pounds to his U.K.-based sixth wife, Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, and make ongoing payments for their children Jalila, 14, and Zayed, 9, underpinned by a bank guarantee of 290 million pounds.

The total amount the children receive could be more or less than 290 million pounds, depending on factors including how long they live and whether they reconcile with their father.

The settlement includes 11

million pounds a year to cover security costs for Princess Haya and the children while they are minors.

In a November ruling that was made public Tuesday, Judge Philip Moor said the family needed "water-tight security," and that "absolutely uniquely," the main threat to them came from Sheikh Mohammed, rather than outside sources.

Haya, 47, fled to the U.K. in 2019 and sought custody of her two children through the British courts. The princess, who is the daughter of the late King Hussein of Jordan, said she was "terrified" of her husband, who is alleged to have ordered the forced return to the Gulf emirate of

two of his daughters.

The long battle in Britain's family courts has disclosed personal and financial details about the powerful but publicity-shy Gulf royals who are among the world's wealthiest people. Sheikh Mohammed, 72, is also the vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, of which Dubai is a part, and a major

horse breeder. The founder of the successful Godolphin horse-racing stable, he is on friendly terms with Queen Elizabeth II.

Haya, a graduate of Oxford University, is also a keen equestrian and competed in show jumping for Jordan at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.



Al Maktoum

Environment

Biden boosts fuel-economy standards to fight climate change

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a major step to fight climate change, the Biden administration is raising vehicle mileage standards to significantly reduce emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases, reversing a Trump-era rollback that loosened fuel efficiency standards.

A final rule issued Monday would raise mileage standards starting in the 2023 model year, reaching a projected industry-wide target of 40 miles per gallon by 2026. The new standard is 25% higher than a rule finalized by the Trump administration last year and 5% higher than a proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency in August.

"We are setting robust and rigorous standards that will aggressively reduce the pollution that is harming people and our planet—and save families money at the same time," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said. He called the rule "a giant step forward" in delivering on President Joe Biden's climate agenda "while paving the way toward an all-electric, zero-emissions transportation future."

The move comes a day after Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin delivered a potentially fatal blow to Biden's \$2 trillion social and environmental policy bill, jeopardizing Democrats' agenda and infuriating the White House. The West Virginia senator said he could not support the sweeping bill, which includes a host of climate proposals, saying it was too expensive and could spark inflation and expand the growing federal debt.

The now-stalled bill in-



Next to children holding a sign saying "less pollution more solutions," Environmental Protection Agency administrator Michael Regan, right, ceremonially signs the Agency's final rule for federal greenhouse gas emissions standards for light duty vehicles, Monday, Dec. 20, 2021, at EPA Headquarters in Washington.

AP PHOTO/JACQUELYN MARTIN

cludes a \$7,500 tax credit to buyers to lower the cost of electric vehicles.

The administration will "continue to fight tirelessly" for the EV tax credits and other incentives in the so-called Build Back Better bill, Regan said, but even without them, "we believe that we proposed a rule that is doable, it's affordable, it's achievable, and we're excited about it."

The new mileage rules are the most ambitious tailpipe pollution standards ever set for passenger cars and light trucks. The standards raise mileage goals set by the

Trump administration that would achieve only 32 miles per gallon in 2026. Biden had set a goal of 38 miles per gallon in August.

The standards also will help expand the market share of zero emissions vehicles, the administration said, with a goal of battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles reaching 17% of new vehicles sold in 2026. EVs and plug-in hybrids are expected to have about 7% market share in 2023.

The EPA said the rule would not only slow climate change, but also improve public health by reducing air pollution and lower costs for drivers through improved fuel efficiency.

Biden has set a goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least half by 2030 as he pushes a history-making shift in the U.S. from internal combustion engines to battery-powered vehicles.

He has urged that components needed to make that sweeping change—from batteries to semiconductors—be made in the United States, too, aiming for both industry and union support for the environmental effort, with the promise of new jobs and billions in federal electric vehicle investments.

While ambitious, the new standards provide adequate lead time for auto manufac-

turers to comply at reasonable costs, the administration said. EPA's analysis shows the industry can comply with the final standards with modest increases in the numbers of electric vehicles entering the fleet.

Environmental and public health groups mostly hailed the new rules, while the trade association representing most major automakers reacted cautiously.

Automakers are "committed to achieving a cleaner, safer, and smarter future," but EPA's final rule for greenhouse gas emissions is more aggressive than originally proposed, "requiring a substantial

increase in electric vehicle sales, well above the 4% of all light-duty sales today," said John Bozzella, president and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation. The group represents manufacturers producing nearly 99% of new cars and light trucks sold in the U.S.

"Achieving the goals of this final rule will undoubtedly require enactment of supportive governmental policies—including consumer incentives ... and support for U.S. manufacturing and supply chain development," Bozzella said in a statement.

"We can all breathe a collective sigh of relief now that a strong federal clean car rule is restored," said Morgan Folger of Environment America, an advocacy group.

Despite pushback from the auto industry, the rule will significantly reduce air and climate pollution, Folger said. She called the announcement "a win" on climate that will help create "an onramp to a future with zero emissions from our cars and trucks."

EPA's action is "an important step forward that will reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution and improve lung health," added Harold Wimmer, president and CEO of the American Lung Association.

EPA called the new rule critical to address climate change. Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, making up 29% of all emissions. Within the transportation sector, passenger cars and trucks are the largest contributor, accounting for 58% of all transportation-related emissions and 17% of overall U.S. carbon emissions.

Most polluted countries

Air quality based on ground monitoring stations that measure levels of fine particulate matter per cubic meter. (2019)

■ Good ■ Moderate ■ Unhealthy for sensitive groups ■ Unhealthy



Cities with the worst air quality

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ghaziabad, India | 6. Noida, India |
| 2. Hotan, China | 7. Gurugram, India |
| 3. Gujranwala, Pakistan | 8. Raiwind, Pakistan |
| 4. Faisalabad, Pakistan | 9. Greater Noida, India |
| 5. Delhi, India | 10. Bandhwari, India |

Source: IQAir AirVisual's 2019 World Air Quality Report, Graphic: Staff, TNS

Guam Shoreline Atlas study to support coastal preservation efforts

HAGÁTÑA, Guam—The Guam Coastal Management Program has released a new Guam Shoreline Atlas study with emphasis on shorelines experiencing erosion, containing at-risk infrastructure, or needing shore protection.

The study was prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District and describes the physical characteristics of Guam's shoreline. The Guam Shoreline Atlas can be downloaded at bsp.guam.gov.

"This Atlas provides us with an overview of current shoreline conditions throughout Guam. With this, our shoreline managers and environmental protectors have the tools they need for us to effec-

tively combat erosion and preserve our beaches," said Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero.

"The data in this study will be integral to our vision and action items as we implement the 2050 Guåhan Sustainability Plan in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals," said Lt. Gov. Josh Tenorio. "In addition to our Guam Green Growth initiatives, this research will support the sustainable and resilient economic recovery of our island."

"The study was conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District under the Planning Assistance to the States Program at no cost to the Government of Guam," said Tyrone Tai-

tano, director of the Bureau of Statistics and Plans. "We are pleased with the completion of the Guam Shoreline Atlas and thank the USACE for their study documenting Guam's coastal erosion concerns, as well as providing crucial data for our continued shoreline planning."

The Guam Shoreline Atlas was completed in two phases: field investigations and preparation of the Atlas. Field investigations were conducted to identify, photograph, document, and map existing shoreline features, conditions, and problem areas. Data collected from these investigations were used to create an interactive Portable Document Format Ground-level digital

photographs captured the site characteristics and documented the shoreline condition for inclusion in this Atlas. Global Positioning System units were used to accurately map the shoreline features. Additionally, a Geographic Information System geodatabase containing compatible spatial data from the study was also provided.

"The GIS spatial data is fundamental for our program's comprehensive planning efforts for coastal erosion, mitigation efforts, and continued shoreline planning efforts," said GCMP administrator Edwin Reyes.

For more information, contact Edwin Reyes at (671)4759672 or edwin.reyes@bsp.guam.gov. (PR)

Life & Style

‘Summer of Soul,’ ‘Drive My Car’ make Oscars shortlist

Documentaries about Julia Child, “Black Woodstock,” the pandemic and The Velvet Underground and acclaimed international films like Japan’s “Drive My Car,” Iran’s “A Hero” and Norway’s “The Worst Person in the World” just got a little closer to scoring Oscar nominations.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Tuesday Wednesday unveiled its shortlists for several categories, including documentary feature, interna-

tional feature, original song, original score, visual effects and makeup and hairstyling. Nominations for all categories for the 94th Oscars will be announced on Feb. 8.

Members of the documentary branch of the academy culled from 138 eligible films to pick 15 shortlist selections, including two pandemic-themed films (“In the Same Breath,” “The First Wave”), Questlove’s “Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)”

about a near-forgotten 1969 music event, Julie Cohen and Betsy West’s “Julia” and Todd Haynes’ “The Velvet Underground.” Other notable selections are “The Rescue,” about the Thai soccer team and their rescue for a remote cave, “Procession,” “Attica” and “Flee.” “Billie Eilish: The World’s a Little Blurry” also made the cut.

“Flee,” an animated documentary about an Afghan refugee made by Danish filmmaker Jonas Poher Rasmussen

was also among the films that advanced in the international feature category. Other strong contenders include Ryusuke Hamaguchi “Drive My Car,” which has been a critics group darling, Asghar Farhadi’s Iranian drama “A Hero,” Italian director Paolo Sorrentino’s semi-autobiographical “The Hand of God” and Joachim Trier’s dark romantic comedy “The Worst Person in the World,” from Norway. France’s entry, “Titane,” did not make the cut despite hav-

ing won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year.

Original songs in contention include some from major music stars like Beyoncé’s “Be Alive,” from “King Richard,” Billie Eilish’s James Bond song “No Time To Die,” Van Morrison’s “Down to Joy” from “Belfast,” U2’s “Sing 2” song, Kid Cudi and JAY-Z’s “Guns Go Bang” from “The Harder they Fall,” Brian Wilson’s “Where I Belong” and Ariana Grande’s “Don’t Look Up.”

Composers Jonny Greenwood (“The Power of the Dog,” “Spencer”) and Hans Zimmer (“Dune,” “No Time To Die”) could be in store for double original song nominations come Feb. 8. Blockbusters like “Dune” and “No Time To Die” also advanced in a number of categories including visual effects, sound and makeup and hairstyling.

Winners will be revealed at the ceremony on Sunday, March 27, which will be broadcast live on ABC. (AP)

Denzel Washington on directing: ‘I’m still learning’

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP NATIONAL WRITER

Preparing to direct “A Journal for Jordan,” a bittersweet love story opening on Christmas Day, Denzel Washington says he took a “master class.”

That master class consisted of starring in a movie directed by Joel Coen, “The Tragedy of Macbeth,” which opens the same day. “I steal from the best,” Washington says with a smile.

Denzel Washington the actor has some 60 films under his belt, plus two Oscars, and at 66 is universally regarded as one of the all-time greats. Denzel Washington the director has just completed his fourth feature. “I don’t call myself a director,” he said matter-of-factly in an interview last week. “I’m still learning.”

Before “A Journal for Jordan,” based on the book by former New York Times editor Dana Canedy about her fiancée, who fought and died in Iraq, and the journal of life lessons he left their baby son, Washington’s most recent directorial effort was “Fences.”



Actor Michael B. Jordan, left, and director Denzel Washington, right, attend the world premiere of “A Journal for Jordan” at AMC Lincoln Square on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, in New York. AP

The 2016 film version of the August Wilson play starred Washington himself and Viola Davis, who won an Oscar.

Washington directed himself in his other two feature outings as well—“The Great Debaters” in 2007 and “Antwone Fisher” in 2002. But he says he’d rather stay offscreen when he’s at the helm.

“I prefer not being in the films,” he said. “Early on, it had to do with me being able to raise the money to get the films made. Then ‘Fences,’

obviously we had great success onstage, so that translated to film. But I enjoy being a more behind-the-scenes kind of guy.”

Aside from his recent collaboration with Coen, whom he calls “one of the greatest directors,” Washington says he sought insight from some other directors he admires.

“I spent a great day with Paul Thomas Anderson a month or so ago, to listen to how he works,” he said. “And Steve McQueen, I’ve been

talking with a little bit. I’m learning how to do it, so I’m interested in learning from the best. So, I’ve been talking to the best.”

Michael B. Jordan says he, too, is interested in learning from the best—which is why it was so impactful for him to be directed by Washington. The actor gives a charismatic performance as Canedy’s fiancée, 1st Sgt. Charles Monroe King, who was killed in Iraq in 2006 at age 48. (Canedy is portrayed by Chanté Adams.)

Report details ‘failure’ in handling of 1st Smollett case

CHICAGO (AP)—The initial handling of allegations that former “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett had staged a fake attack in Chicago represented a “major failure of operations” by the local prosecutor’s office, according to a lawyer who was appointed to review the case.

The 68-page report released Monday detailed multiple instances of false statements by State’s Attorney Kim Foxx and others in her office in 2019, when they first prosecuted Smollett before abruptly dropping the charges weeks later.

Some of her office’s actions may be violations of legal ethics, special prosecutor Dan Webb concluded, though he found nothing criminal.

Smollett, who is Black and gay, was recently convicted of lying to police in January 2019 about what he said was a racist, homophobic attack. Webb, who took over the case, said Smollett staged the attack to get publicity. Smollett is expected to be sentenced in 2022.

Webb released a portion of

the report, including its major conclusions, in 2020. The full report released Monday documents interviews with Foxx, dozens of employees in her office, Chicago police officers and friends and family members of Smollett.

Foxx had recused herself from the Smollett case before it was dropped. She told Webb’s team that she was surprised when all 16 counts against Smollett were dropped, and that she believed he should have been required to admit some wrongdoing.

Foxx also said she believed prosecutors in her office “wanted to get this guy out of town” because of the media attention that accompanied the case.

Foxx later said in a media statement that the case was dropped just like thousands of other similar cases, which Webb concluded was not true.

“The fact that such a significant mischaracterization could be asserted without sufficient vetting ... is unacceptable for an office that must be transparent and maintain public confidence,” Webb’s report states.

Friend’s death cloaked in secrecy and silence

DEAR ABBY: A dear friend of mine, “Dirk,” died by suicide a couple of years ago. We were very close when we were young but saw each other only occasionally as adults. However, on the occasions we did get together, it always felt like we picked up where we left off.

I found out about my friend’s death from a family member after I discovered his phone number was no longer working and his Facebook and Messenger accounts had been deleted. He had died a few months earlier. Dirk’s family asked me not to tell anyone that the death was a suicide. They didn’t want his memory to be about that final decision. Because there was no obituary in the newspaper (they didn’t want one), it feels as though my friend has been erased with no trace.

I’m still having a hard time with his death. I feel like I should put an in-memoriam obituary in the paper. I also feel a need to talk about it with others (both for myself and as a warning to others). My mother thinks I should abide by the wishes of the family. What do you think?

MISSING MY FRIEND IN OHIO

DEAR MISSING: When someone takes their own life, there are usually a range of emotions experienced by the survivors. These can include shame, guilt and anger. Fortu-

nately, there are mental health programs that can help with these if the family is aware they are available. A call to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) could guide them if they reach out. I sincerely hope you will listen to your mother and respect the wishes of the deceased’s family, even though you do not agree. If you do what you are contemplating, it could cause the family even more pain.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Our 26-year-old married son currently lives with us. His wife of three years (close in age) was raised in a different culture and has recently started living with her parents in a city four hours away. My son has a stable, well-paying job and cannot relocate. They talk on the phone many times a day and night, and both say their marriage is “fine.”

She doesn’t work and doesn’t finish anything she starts. She contributes to her family’s household by using the car and money our son provides. She says she became depressed when she lived in our town but is happy with her parents and really doesn’t see moving out. We feel she is immature, controlling and taking advantage of our son. We have told him as much. He understands he has a situation but seems too weak to change it. What more can we do?

FLUSTERED PARENTS IN TEXAS

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



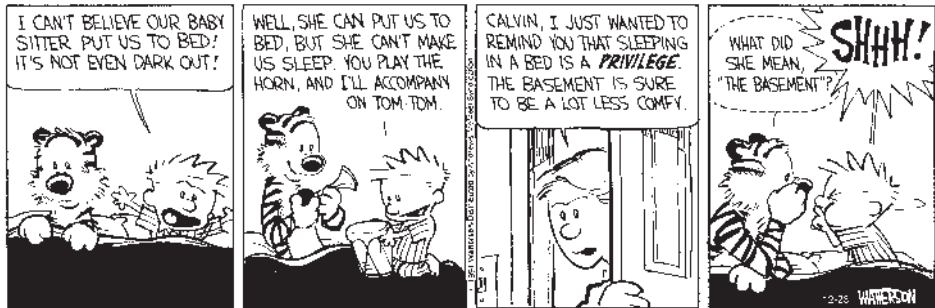
DEAR PARENTS: Your son knows your opinion. You can—and should—do nothing more than you already have. Because he and his wife say they are happy with the situation, keep your mouths shut and refrain from stirring the pot. At some point, one of them will want to make changes, which may mean your son will have to relocate. But this is his problem, and one he must resolve on his own.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

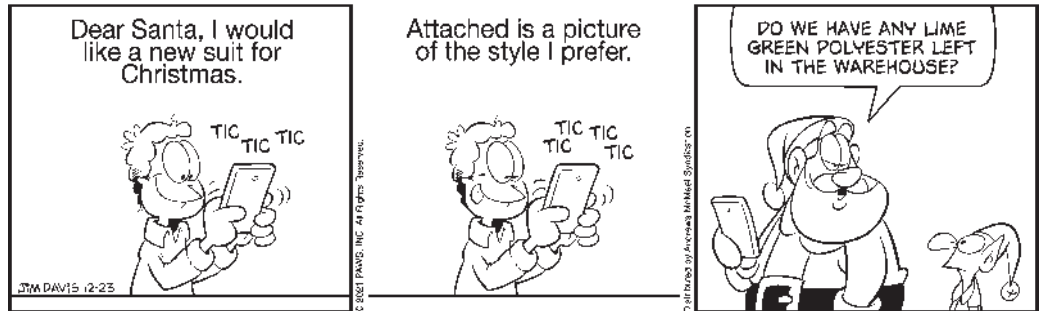
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Met solo
5 Author Vidal
9 Tax prep pro
12 Conks on the head
13 Mountain goat
14 Chop
15 Ski resort transport
17 Coach Par-seghian
18 Singer/song-writer Neil
19 Gin —
21 Rejection
22 Marathoner's woe
24 Lobbying orgs
27 Pair
28 Feels unwell
31 La-la lead-in
32 Agrees to
33 Odometer start
34 "Frozen" character
36 Salonga of "Miss Saigon"
37 Winter blanket

DOWN

1 Grade school basics
2 Architect Mies van der —
3 Apple tablet
4 Tibetans, e.g.
5 Arizona river
6 Kimono sash
7 Game caller
8 Surplus
9 Victor
10 Salon request
11 Vacation-ing
16 "Top Hat" studio Ms. Thurman
20 Ms. Thurman
22 Cool veggies
23 Activist Parks
24 Cutesy-
25 "You've got mail" ISP
26 Mexican dinner orders
27 Knuckle-head
29 Privy
30 Plant seeds
35 Support-ing
37 Fired
39 Central
40 Genetic letters
41 Mark Harmon TV series
42 Canal zones?
43 Furniture brand
44 Really, really
45 Sail support
46 Son of Seth
49 Showtime rival
50 100%

Solution time: 24 mins.

L	A	D	S	H	A	G	A	D	A	M
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C	O	A	T	T	R	F	F	T	W	I
I	O	T	E	A	G	F	A	K	T	S
W	I	L	O	A	T	N	A	R	C	
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Yesterday's answer 12-23

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Noel Wells, 35; Eddie Vedder, 57; Susan Lucci, 75; Harry Shearer, 78.

Happy Birthday: Stick to a plan. If you make too many changes, you'll fall short of your goal. Keep life simple and moderate, and use your intelligence to develop a plan that will stabilize and secure your position. A steady pace, well-thought-out plan and explicit execution will encourage positive results. Trust and believe in you and your ability to excel. Your numbers are 8, 15, 23, 29, 32, 38, 40.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Make a pit stop and bid a warm and happy holiday to someone you appreciate. The outcome will be informative and will pique your imagination. A proposition will turn out to be worth considering. Someone close to you will offer sage advice. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Indulgent behavior is problematic if not controlled. Everyone wants to enjoy the festive season, but doing so is necessary to maintain a good reputation. Set boundaries, limit consumption, and focus on peace, love and happiness. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Put your ideas to the test and see what happens. Take advantage of an opportunity, regardless of the circumstances. A playful approach will help you attract someone who can further your interests with a suggestion, contact or partnership. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Traveling, reaching out to friends and relatives, and making plans for the holidays will be

heartwarming. Don't be disappointed if things don't go according to plan; bask in whatever comes your way, and something good will unfold. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Act on your instincts and get things done. Be the life of the party and the one who brings everyone together. Spoiling loved ones and those you want something from will put you in a great position if you are sincere. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Stick to what's doable. Taking on too much or overreacting will result in roadblocks. Consider your options, then head in a direction tailored to your needs. Finding comfort and peace of mind is within reach. Romance will enhance your life. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Know who and what you can rely on, put your energy where it counts and take care of those unable to do for themselves. Your consideration will be appreciated by those who matter. Leave those who criticize to their own devices. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't put pressure on yourself or let anyone put demands on you. Fight to free yourself from monotony, and venture in an exciting direction. Observation will lead to concepts and opportunities that make you feel alive. Press forward with optimism. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Put a plan together and get moving. It's a busy time of the year, and keeping up will give you the incentive you require to go over and above your expectations. Aim to please, and you'll out-

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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shine anyone who challenges you. ★★★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take advantage of an opportunity to change where or how you live. Look over your options and suggestions, then make a move that will cut your overhead and free up cash to pursue something that excites you. Romance is featured. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Anticipation can result in disappointment if you conjure up unrealistic scenarios. Don't dwell on change when your concern is to stabilize and secure your position and lifestyle. Moderation is encouraged. Offer kind gestures instead of lavish gifts. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You can have fun without being indulgent. The less you spend, drink and eat, the better off you'll be at the end of the festive season. Monitor your intake, offer to be the designated driver, and put your health and well-being first. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are spontaneous, aggressive and willful. You are unique and innovative.

★ Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★ You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★ Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★ Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★ Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

1					6			3
	7							6
					8	2		
9		2	8		1			
		4		5		8		
			3		4	1		2
				9	4			
	3						8	
2			7					9

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/23

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	5	7	1	2	9	6	4	3
9	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	8
6	1	4	7	3	8	5	9	2
2	9	6	3	8	1	4	5	7
5	7	1	2	9	4	3	8	6
4	3	8	6	7	5	9	2	1
7	4	9	8	1	3	2	6	5
3	8	5	9	6	2	1	7	4
1	6	2	5	4	7	8	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BANKING SOLUTIONS

Solution: 4 letters

R S I Y L E C R E M M O C C C
O A N S R A E N I L N O U O A
S V T R K R O W T E N S R L L
I I E E N A A G T S T P R L C
V N R F A T E C U O O N E E U
D G N S O U E L M R T O N C L
A S E N L J T E A N P I C T A
T A T A O A R T E A N O M T Y I
I L V R N E I M H S A C B O O
S A P T T O Y S I F S A R N R
O R M A N A G E R P U S A D S
P Y I T P E R C E N T N N U D
E L B E R U S N I E T A D E R
D E C I R P D N E R T R S S A
D I S B U R S E M E N T S O C

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12/23

Advisor, Brand, Calculator, Cards, Carry, Cash, Collection, Commerce, Consultant, Corporation, Cost, Currency, Customer, Date, Debt, Deposit, Disbursement, Dues, Funds, Goal, Hire, Insure, Internet, Loan, Manage, Network, Online, Payment, Percent, Price, Project, Retail, Salary, Savings, Shop, Spend, Transaction, Transfers, Trend, Value
Yesterday's Answer: Good Morning
The NEW Treasury 43 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6430.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Herro, Robinson each score 26, Heat roll past Pacers, 125-96



MIAMI (AP)—Tyler Herro scored 26 points in his return from a three-game absence with a bruised thigh, Duncan Robinson tied a season-high with 26 points and the Miami Heat rolled past the Indiana Pacers 125-96 on Tuesday night.

Miami tied a franchise record with 22 made 3-pointers, the fourth time the Heat have made that many.

Max Strus scored 18 points, KZ Okpala scored 16 and Kyle Lowry finished with eight points, 11 rebounds and 12 assists for Miami. Omer Yurtseven added 13 rebounds for the Heat, who had 30 assists.

"When the ball's moving like that, people just feel the energy of the ball, unselfish play," Robinson said. "It's easy to let it fly."

Chris Duarte and Caris LeVert each scored 17 for Indiana, which got 14 points from Oshae Brissett and 12 points from Domantas Sabonis. Indiana lost Malcolm Brogdon in the first half with more soreness in his right Achilles, something that has been bothering him. He had one point and two assists in eight minutes, and when he left the game it was quickly determined that he couldn't return.

"We'll keep treating it, we'll keep looking at everything we can to help this situation be resolved," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "It's obviously a big loss on the floor without having him out there. Just a tough night."

It was the first game back for Carlisle, who entered the league's health and safety protocols on Dec. 9 after testing positive for COVID-19 and missed four games. Indiana led by five early, but the deficit was 12 by the time the first quarter ended and eventually reached 33.

"Miami was tremendous," Carlisle said. "They played a phenomenal game. They played at an extremely high level and we obviously didn't play well. So it was a tough night."

Miami improved to 2-1 in a nine-game stretch where it'll play at least eight games against teams with losing records. The Heat are playing Orlando twice, Detroit twice, the Pacers, San Antonio, Houston and Sacramento in this portion of the season; Washington (16-15) currently has the best record of Miami's opponents between now and Jan. 2.

The Heat finished 22 of 49 from 3-point range, with Udonis Haslem making the record-tying shot with 1:36 left. The Heat, without starters Jimmy Butler, Bam Adebayo and P.J. Tucker, got 75 points from undrafted players.

"Our veteran group really infuses so much confidence in our young guys," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said.



Miami Heat guard Kyle Lowry, right, drives to the basket past Indiana Pacers guard Malcolm Brogdon during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021, in Miami.

AP

Knicks 105, Pistons 91

In New York, Evan Fournier scored 22 points, Julius Randle and Kemba Walker each had 21 and New York won at home for the first time in almost a month, beating Detroit.

Mitchell Robinson had 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Knicks, who had dropped five straight at Madison Square Garden since beating the Los Angeles Lakers on Nov. 23. They are just 6-10 at home.

Walker was out of the rotation entirely but started a

second straight game with six players in health and safety protocols and Derrick Rose out again with ankle soreness. Walker had eight rebounds and five assists.

Saben Lee scored 16 points for the Pistons, who had lost 14 in a row before beating Miami on Sunday.

The Knicks won for only the third time in 11 games overall.

Pelicans 111, Trail Blazers 97

In New Orleans, Brandon In-

gram had 28 points, Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 22 of his 27 in the second half and New Orleans beat Portland for its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Josh Hart added 20 points for the Pelicans, who shot 52.5% while winning for the eighth time in 13 games following a 3-16 start—all while awaiting the return of All-Star forward Zion Williamson from an offseason foot injury.

Damian Lillard scored 39 for the Trail Blazers, who won their previous two games. Ju-

suf Nurkic added 17 points and Norman Powell had 16.

Mavericks 114, Timberwolves 102

In Dallas, Jalen Brunson had 26 points, Dorian Finney-Smith scored 15 of his 19 in the second half and Dallas defeated Minnesota.

A total of nine players, including three starters, missed the game because they are in the NBA's health and safety protocol.

Brunson scored 16 points in the first half. Finney-Smith hit

NBA has 'no plans' to pause season, Silver tells ESPN

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Tuesday that there are no plans to pause the season, even as numbers of players entering the league's health and safety protocols related to the coronavirus continues to rise.

Silver, in an interview with ESPN, said the league has examined multiple options but does not yet see a reason to stop play. Through early Tuesday evening, at least 84 players from 20 teams—not including some coaches and staffers—were believed to be in the protocols, though those numbers tend to change almost on an hourly basis. The count is largely based on what teams have disclosed on their most recent injury report.

"Frankly, we're having trouble coming up with what the logic would be behind pausing right now," Silver said. "As we look through these cases literally ripping through the country right now, putting aside the rest of the world, I think we're finding ourselves where we sort of knew we were going to get to for the past several months—and that is that this virus will not be eradicated

and we're going to have to learn to live with it. That's what we're experiencing in the league right now."

Silver's remarks came on the same day that the 10 NBA teams with games scheduled on Christmas were told by the league that shifting some game times is a possibility for the planned five-game slate, if virus-related issues force changes to the lineup and create holes in the national television schedule.

The league told the teams the priority is filling the ABC windows for Saturday's games, which means the slots at 2:30 p.m., 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Eastern. For now, those games, in order, would have Boston at Milwaukee, Golden State at Phoenix and Brooklyn at the Los Angeles Lakers.

The other games on the Christmas schedule are Atlanta at New York at noon Eastern, and Dallas at Utah at 10:30 p.m. Eastern. Both of those games are scheduled to be shown on ESPN.

The league called the notion of shifting game times—which may happen if a game is postponed—a contingency plan in the memo distributed to the teams involved and

obtained by The Associated Press. Decisions on whether shifting times is needed could come as late as Friday. Any decisions made on Saturday to postpone a Christmas game would not impact the remainder of the day's schedule, the league said.

"There's no doubt those five Christmas Day games are important," Silver said. "But as you know, we play many games every day."

The NBA has postponed seven games so far this season, but none from Wednesday onward yet. Some of the teams scheduled to play on Saturday have numerous players and coaches in the league's health and safety protocols right now; the Nets currently have 10 players on that list, which is the highest known figure for any team.

The league is allowing teams to sign replacements to hardship contracts when a player tests positive for the virus, with hopes such moves can minimize the need for postponements.

Other top NBA players were being added to the protocols list Tuesday. Toronto's Fred VanVleet is now one of seven players in protocols for

the Raptors, but the team—anticipating some roster reinforcements—flew to Chicago on Tuesday in anticipation of a Wednesday game there against the Bulls.

Also Tuesday, Atlanta teammates Danilo Gallinari and Clint Capela joined a Hawks list that already included Trae Young, raising questions about their availability for Christmas.

Silver told ESPN that a very small number of the league's current cases involve players or coaches who have gone through the three-shot process—two Pfizer or Moderna shots, then a booster—and that those people have largely been asymptomatic or experiencing no worse than mild symptoms.

"Boosters are highly effective," Silver said, adding that the league and the National Basketball Players Association are trying to get the league's rate of boosted players increased significantly. The NBA has said 97% of players are fully vaccinated and the NBPA said Tuesday night that 65% of eligible players are boosted, which they pointed to as better than twice the national average.

"Today, we committed to facilitating the delivery of boost-

two 3-pointers during a 10-0 run in the fourth quarter that wiped out Minnesota's last lead.

Sterling Brown added 12 points and 11 rebounds in his first start this season.

Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 26 points and 14 rebounds. D'Angelo Russell had 14 points and 12 assists.

Suns 108, Lakers 90

In Los Angeles, Devin Booker continued to distance himself from a hamstring injury that cost him seven games, scoring 24 points with nine rebounds and seven assists as the Phoenix Suns earned a 108-90 victory Tuesday night over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Booker played 32 minutes and went 8 of 16 from the field one game after he was on the court for 26 minutes in his return Sunday during a blow-out victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Deandre Ayton had 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Mikal Bridges scored 14 as the Suns won their fourth consecutive game and improved to 2-2 on the road since the end of their 18-game winning streak Dec. 3.

LeBron James scored 34 points for the Lakers, who lost their third consecutive game as coach Frank Vogel remained in health and safety protocols for the second straight. Four Lakers players also are in protocols, including starting guard Avery Bradley.

er shots to all eligible players, and the NBPA is strongly encouraging all of our members to receive a booster as soon as possible," the union said.

Silver also said that the omicron variant is a "beyond dominant" player in the rise of positive tests within the NBA in recent days, estimating that somewhere around "90% of the positive cases we're seeing right now are omicron."

The league is also "actively looking" at changing some protocols and is in constant contact with other leagues, Silver said, about whether there are ways to allow asymptomatic players to take the floor or at least escape the protocols more quickly than the current rules allow. It does not appear a change in policy there is imminent.

"We're comfortable with the protocols we're following right now," Silver said.

There were some notable removals from the protocols list Tuesday. The Lakers said Dwight Howard and Talen Horton-Tucker would be available to play Tuesday night against Phoenix. But Lakers coach Frank Vogel and four players remain out, all because of protocols.

"This virus, unfortunately, isn't going anywhere," Silver said.

Jalen Hurts has 3 TDs, Eagles come back to beat Washington



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Nick Sirianni yelled at Jalen Hurts on the sideline for being careless with the ball and losing a fumble. Then the Philadelphia Eagles coach saw his starting quarterback hold on tight to carry the team on his shoulders.

Hurts ran for two touchdowns and threw for another, helping the Eagles come back from an early deficit to beat virus-ravaged Washington 27-17 Tuesday night in a critical showdown with NFC playoff implications.

In his first game back from an ankle injury, Hurts scored on a pair of 1-yard QB sneaks to set the single-season franchise record for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback with 10 and connected with Greg Ward on a 19-yard TD pass.

"He played a great football game—one of the best I've seen him play," Sirianni said of Hurts. "Jalen is able to take tough coaching. He responded great and played a great game."

Hurts was 20 of 26 for 296 yards passing with the TD and a bad-luck interception when Dallas Goedert dropped a catchable pass and the ball bounced off his right foot and into the hands of Washington's Landon Collins.

That was a bad bounce for Philadelphia that helped stake Washington (6-8) to a 10-point lead after the first quarter. Behind a dominant effort from their offensive line, it was all Eagles (7-7) from there: They outgained Washington 435-



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts celebrates as he leaves the field after an NFL football game against the Washington Football Team, Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021, in Philadelphia. AP

136 the rest of the way and shut down an opponent missing a handful of starters because of COVID-19 protocol.

"I told the guys we had to go in with the mentality of not being denied," Hurts said. "We had so many things go wrong early in the game, but we overcame it."

Miles Sanders exploited the holes in Washington's defense

left by those absences and additional injuries, carrying the ball 18 times for a career-high 131 yards.

"Credit to the offensive line," said Sanders, who became the first Eagles player with back-to-back 100-yard rushing games since LeSean McCoy in 2014. "They're making it very easy on the running backs to run behind them."

Well-rested coming off its bye week, Philadelphia finished with 238 yards rushing, becoming the first team with 175-plus yards on the ground in seven consecutive games since the 1985 Chicago Bears. That's also a first in Eagles franchise history.

"It was unacceptable how they were running around," Washington defensive end

Montez Sweat said.

Goedert made up for his early blunder and a later drop by catching seven passes for 135 yards, including a 45-yard completion.

Despite the game getting pushed back 54 hours because of Washington's coronavirus outbreak, the delay did not allow starting quarterback Taylor Heinicke or backup Kyle

Allen to clear protocol in time to play. Garrett Gilbert, who signed Friday, completed nine of his first 13 passes and finished 20 of 31 for 194 yards.

"I got nothing but respect for Garrett," said receiver Terry McLaurin, whose 46-yard catch was the longest play of the game. "It was challenging for all of us, but he did his job and he put it all out there."

Second-year running back Antonio Gibson ran for Washington's first touchdown and had 20 of his 26 rushing yards on that drive, when he got the ball on all seven plays. He was slowed by a toe injury, the same thing that derailed his rookie season, and Jaret Patterson had the team's other rushing TD.

Washington played without five starters who remained in NFL COVID-19 protocol: Heinicke, 2020 All-Pro right guard Brandon Scherff, center Tyler Larsen, cornerback Kendall Fuller and safety Kamren Curl. Reserve defensive tackle Tim Settle and third-string tight end Sammis Reyes were cleared but inactive.

Philadelphia's only virus-related absence was starting left guard Landon Dickerson.

With Washington running backs coach Randy Jordan unavailable because of COVID-19 protocols, assistant Jennifer King made history filling in for him. King became the first Black woman to serve as a position coach for an NFL game.

"It wasn't really any drop-off," Patterson said. "Coach King is great. She deservedly will be a coach one day, and she did really well."

Cooper Kupp's 2 TD catches carry Rams past Seahawks 20-10

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—After a week of COVID-19 chaos, the Los Angeles Rams went into their rescheduled showdown against Seattle with no full practices and major questions about who would be in uniform until a few hours before kickoff.

The Rams still came out of a tremendously uncertain week with another win because Cooper Kupp and Matthew Stafford have a rock-solid connection.

Kupp caught two touchdown passes from Stafford in the second half, and the Rams held off the Seahawks 20-10 Tuesday night in a game between two COVID-depleted teams.

Kupp broke Isaac Bruce's single-season Rams receptions record in the third quarter with a 6-yard TD catch that was also the 120th of his spectacular year. The NFL's receiving leader then scored a tiebreaking 29-yard touchdown with 10:48 to play on a picture-perfect throw over the

middle from Stafford to cap an 88-yard drive.

Stafford passed for 244 yards and Sony Michel rushed for 92 for the Rams (10-4) in a game postponed from Sunday, while Kupp had nine catches for 136 yards in Los Angeles' third straight victory following a winless November. The Rams hadn't had a normal day since they beat NFC West-leading Arizona last Monday, but their postgame celebration felt joyously familiar.

"Coming off a very big game against the Cardinals and then having all the stuff go on ... it's just being able to navigate the changes in your routine and still put together a game plan and execute when you don't even know who's going to play," said Kupp, a Washington native. "I just thought we did a good job handling that and walking out with a 'W.'"

With its third victory over Seattle in 2021, Los Angeles pulled even with Arizona

atop the NFC West with three games to play, although the Cards hold the tiebreaker on division record.

The Rams were without starting right tackle Rob Havenstein, leading tackler Jordan Fuller, tight end Tyler Higbee and a host of backups after 10 days of roster turmoil, while the Seahawks were without leading receiver Tyler Lockett, starting cornerback D.J. Reed and leading rusher Alex Collins.

"Up until this morning, you really don't know if you're getting some key players (back)," said Sean McVay, who became the third coach in Rams history to post four 10-win seasons. "(Recently) I didn't even know if we had enough guys to be able to field a team."

DeeJay Dallas rushed for a touchdown for the Seahawks (5-9), whose streak of nine consecutive winning seasons under coach Pete Carroll ended. Seattle is still mathematically alive for its ninth play-

off appearance in those 10 seasons, but will regret losing an eminently winnable game at SoFi Stadium.

"There's so many moments in that game I felt like we could have capitalized," said Russell Wilson, who passed for 156 yards. "I think that we've always created such a high standard of playing and found ways to win these close games, and this year, unfortunately, we weren't able to do it."

Carlos Dunlap had three of the Seahawks' four sacks, but they couldn't get enough late stops or big plays from Wilson, who went 17 of 31 and underthrew DK Metcalf on a key play in the fourth quarter, allowing Jalen Ramsey to break it up.

"There were some opportunities in there that we needed to go the other way, and they didn't for one reason or another," Carroll said. "We felt like we kind of kept them under wraps (defensively), but we needed to score again and get ahead."

After Kupp's second TD, Los Angeles stopped Seattle on downs at midfield with 3:21 left when Greg Gaines forced Wilson to throw quickly and officials didn't call possible pass interference committed against Dallas. Matt Gay made his second field goal for Los Angeles with 1:51 left, and Taylor Rapp sealed it with an end zone interception in the final seconds.

"It happened quickly, and it didn't look very good on the little replay that somebody showed me, but I don't know," Carroll said when asked about the no-call. "I'm not bellyaching about that call. We needed to win the game in all the other ways we could win the game."

The Rams hung on in a frustrating game with big performances from their remarkable quarterback-receiver combo. Kupp had his 10th consecutive game with at least 90 yards receiving, a first in the NFL in the past 70 years.

"He's a great player, (and) he's having a fantastic season," Stafford said. "He's such a huge part of what we do as a team, not only on offense. I'm just happy that I get a chance to play with a guy like that. I know a lot of other guys on our team feel the same way. We're just proud of him, watching him do his thing."

Earlier, Stafford became the fastest quarterback in NFL history to rack up 50,000 yards passing when playoff totals are included. His second TD throw to Kupp was a thing of beauty that Kupp broke down thusly: "Matthew is a really good football player, and that's my analysis for that touchdown."

While the Seahawks got to Stafford four times, Von Miller—who came off the Rams' reserve/COVID-19 list earlier in the day—got his first sack for the Rams during the first half.

Aaron Donald then dropped Wilson in the second half for his 17th sack in their 17 games against each other.

Flor Jones wins CWGA's December tourney

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Flor Jones was as surprised as any to emerge as the champion of the CNMI Women's Golf Association's December Ace of the Month Tournament last Saturday, Dec 18, at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	21	9	.700	—
Philadelphia	16	15	.516	5½
Boston	15	16	.484	6½
Toronto	14	15	.483	6½
New York	14	17	.452	7½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	19	13	.594	—
Washington	16	15	.516	2½
Charlotte	16	17	.485	3½
Atlanta	14	15	.483	3½
Orlando	6	25	.194	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	19	10	.655	—
Cleveland	19	12	.613	1
Milwaukee	19	13	.594	1½
Indiana	13	19	.406	7½
Detroit	5	25	.167	14½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	19	13	.594	—
Dallas	15	15	.500	3
San Antonio	12	18	.400	6
New Orleans	11	21	.344	8
Houston	10	21	.323	8½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	21	9	.700	—
Denver	15	14	.517	5½
Minnesota	15	16	.484	6½
Portland	13	19	.406	9
Oklahoma City	10	19	.345	10½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	25	5	.833	—
Golden State	25	6	.806	½
L.A. Clippers	16	15	.516	9½
L.A. Lakers	16	16	.500	10
Sacramento	13	19	.406	13

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	394	243
Miami	7	7	0	.500	285	312
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	250	428

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	9	5	0	.643	337	309
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	398	300
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	207	372
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	196	370

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	334	315
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	369	303
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.536	291	335
Cleveland	7	7	0	.500	292	305

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	7	0	.500	285	243
Las Vegas	7	7	0	.500	299	374

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	10	4	0	.714	401	293
Philadelphia	7	7	0	.500	364	308
Washington	6	8	0	.429	283	351
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.286	238	331

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	410	306
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	313	285
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	258	384
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	271	313

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	359	302
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	361	342
e-Chicago	4	10	0	.286	240	349
e-Detroit	2	11	1	.179	243	366

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	4	0	.714	378	284
L.A. Rams	10	4	0	.714	386	303
San Francisco	8	6	0	.571	360	314
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	282	282

e-Eliminated from playoffs
y-clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Flor Jones, co-owner of Top Shelf Wine & Spirits, topped the CNMI Women's Golf Association's December Ace of the Month Tournament last Saturday, Dec 18, at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 45-year-old co-owner of Top Shelf Wine & Spirits shot a net score of 69 to bag the year's last tournament. She actually fired a gross score of 91, but her total was whittled down to 69 due to her 22 handicap.

"I'm not really happy with the score because my goal was to break 80. I'm a perfectionist. I played it safe because of the fast greens and didn't really hit that hard," he said, adding that it took a while for her to adjust to the greens because she just returned from the U.S. mainland where she played in pretty much slow greens.

The Manila-born but Mindanao, Philippines-raised Jones said her strategy heading into the December tournament was just sticking close to the best player in her group, which just happened to be her namesake, Sherlyn Jones.

"The plan was just to stay behind her because she's a very good golfer. I don't want to make a mistake when you play with that group. My goal was to match the good golfer in our group."

Flor Jones went on to have a split of 46 in the front nine and a 45 in the back nine. Her highlights include a par in hole No.



CNMI Women's Golf Association members take a selfie at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort during their December Ace of the Month Tournament last Saturday, Dec 18.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

7. The lowlights, she said, was she 3-putted a couple of holes.

"I was shooting for an 85 but I 3-putted three times. The 91 is actually not my best score," she said.

Jones, who started playing the sport in 2006 but only took it seriously five years

ago, dedicated her win in the CWGA December tournament to no other than herself.

"Because I've been working hard and all I want is to be a better golfer. My handicap is 22 but usually it's 16," she said.

Coming in second to Flor

Jones in CWGA's December tournament was no other than Sherlyn Jones. The veteran lady golfer came away with a net of 73 built around a gross of 84. The 9-handicapper had a 43 in the first nine holes and a 42 in the last nine. Completing the Top 3 was Yuko Togawa who shot a net of 78. The CWGA president had a splendid gross of 78 (41-37).

A total of nine golfers took part in the CWGA December tournament. The rest were Sunny Hyun Son (net 79), Lou Kim (net 79), Yi Su Jeong (net 82), Terry Guerrero (net 82), Lorraine Babauta (net 84), and Sae Hee Kim (net 86).

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.



Some of the teams that took part in Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday pose for a group photo at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

MARK RABAGO

COLDEEN

From Page 20

in this event those funds will go to a local charity and actually if you look at our poster we used Bob Coldeen's name and his catchphrase 'Did you get that, Bob?' so he will be the one to choose the local charity as a way for our sport to thank him," he said.

Center for Independent Living executive director Susan Satur can't help but heap

praise for Coldeen choosing the non-profit organization as the beneficiary of NMA's Annual Christmas Island Relay.

"We're just really, really grateful to Bob. I want to thank him. This is like amazing and I don't even know if he knew about the center. I'm so excited. I cannot tell you how grateful we are to Bob. It's so amazing. Were just really, really happy. He's such a legend. How did he knew about us? He's such a won-

derful person," she said.

Established in 2001, CLI provides a comprehensive range of services to enable people with disabilities to live as independently as they choose within the community. It also seeks to ensure the rights of people with disabilities to live independently and fully integrated within the community.

Sapong, meanwhile, thanked everyone responsible for making the yearend An-

nual Christmas Island Relay a success despite the recent surge in COVID-19 in the community.

"We actually went back and see what's happening in the community. We noticed there's not much restrictions outdoors. So what we did was do protocols with different heats and everything was on-line entry so there was no cash transaction," he said.

Sapong added they were sort of duty-bound to go

JINNO SUKE

From Page 20

He also referenced CNMI Sports Hall of Famer and Olympian Jonathan Sakovich's 54.44 record in the boys' 15-16 age group and his CNMI record 53.98 in the boys' 17-18 division.

"The CNMI record is 53.98 set by Jonathan Sakovich. We can understand easily why Jinno's 53.72 is a superfast time for the CNMI," he said.

Kimura was equally impressed with Litulumar's performance in the women's 50m freestyle.

"Asaka amazingly cut the

30-second barrier. Her time was 29.96. Asaka missed closely her target in the women's 100m freestyle, so she was very enthusiastic with her swim in the 50m freestyle. Asaka also beat two Micronesian swimmers on the way to her awesome performance in the 50m freestyle," he said.

Aside from Suzuki, Litulumar, and fellow national swimmers Juhn Tenorio and Shoko Litulumar and coach Kimura, also part of the CNMI delegation in Abu Dhabi are Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation representatives Richard Sikkell and Hiroko Tenorio.

through with the Christmas Island Relay as the event is literally NMA's longest running event. He said NMA has been in existence for the past 39 years and save for a couple of occasions, they've always staged the 13.7-mile race from the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi.

"We wanted the inspire the community because most of the sports events have been cancelled this year. That's why we decided to go ahead with this and consulting with specialists in our group to make sure last minute to announce it," he said.

In all, only one team out of the 20 that signed up didn't partake in the Christmas Island Relay. And for Sapong, it's alright as it was better for Team CV-19 to stay away as it obviously stood for COVID-19.

CAROL

From Page 20

a different referee because she was horrible at calling the balls. I thought that her calls were very untrustworthy. If I have won those points that I lost, the momentum of the game would have shifted," said Lee.

She, however, acknowledged that the match shouldn't have been determined by the umpire's missed call if she only played better.

"But also I could have played more aggressively by hitting more down the lines, go to the net, and finish off the point either at the net or from swing volley. I'm planning to send a long complaint to the official UTR and send them a video clip," she said.



**Herro, Robinson
each score 26,
Heat roll past
Pacers, 125-96**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Flor Jones
wins CWGA's
December
tourney**

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20 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



Carol Lee runner-up in Miami tourney

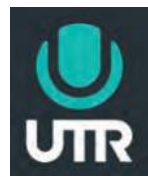
By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI's Carol Lee narrowly lost in the finals of the UTR Pro Tennis Series Miami Women tennis league last Monday in Miami, Florida.

The Georgia Tech sophomore won her first five matches in the tournament before losing to Jessica Livianu of St. John's University in the finals, 6-7 (3), 5-7.

The 5'9" Saipan Community School alumna advanced to the championship round after beating University of North Carolina's Kacie Harvey in the semifinals, 6-0, 6-3, last Dec. 19.

Lee started her campaign in the UTR Pro Tennis Series Miami Women tennis league



with a 7-5, 5-1 win over Nicole Conard of Dartmouth last Dec. 14. She followed that up with a 6-2, 6-4 triumph over Tenika McGiffin of University of Tennessee 6-2, 6-4 the next day.

On Dec. 16, Lee easily handled Kelsey Lewis of Australia, 6-1, 6-0, before barging into the quarterfinals of the tourney after outlasting Isabel Pacheco of University Sports Program (no scores available).

"Overall, I am happy with the results from the tourna-

ment. I felt that I have stepped up my game from the previous matches I played. I am looking forward to compete next spring semester with the team (Georgia Tech)," Lee told *Saipan Tribune* after her runner-up finish in the tournament.

The 2021 ITA Scholar-Athlete said her mindset for the tournament was strong and her body was ready to battle.

"I was confident to play on clay courts because I knew that my type of play style would work really well."

The finals actually could've gone a third set as a controversial call at 6-5 and the 12th game at 15-15 all changed the complexion of the match. Lee hit an apparent winner on the inside corner based on video footage that the umpire ultimately called out.

"I wished that I could have
See CAROL on Page 19

Jinnosuke, Asaka finish strong in Abu Dhabi

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jinnosuke Suzuki and Asaka Litulumar closed the CNMI's participation in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships with a bang last Monday with impressive swims inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Suzuki saw action in his last event of the international meet and completed the men's 100m freestyle in 53.72.

"I am happy with the results of my 100m freestyle because I got a 53 and. My goal was to get a 54 but I was able to

beat it by a second," said the 16-year-old student from Marianas High School.

For her part, Litulumar swam her women's 50m free-



style in 29.96.

"My 50m freestyle was an amazing race because I cut 30 seconds! I was very close to not cutting it, but I pushed myself to go harder and I did my best until the end. I'm really happy with my result!" said the 16-year-old student also from MHS.

CNMI national swimming

coach Hiroyuki Kimura congratulated Suzuki and Litulumar for a job well done in the final day of the world championships.

"I was so surprised with Jinnosuke's time of 100m freestyle. A few years ago, it is the dream of every CNMI swimmer to swim under 54 seconds in the 100m freestyle," he said.

As a point of comparison, the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach said CNMI swimming royalty, Dean Palacios, swam a 55.80 in the same event in the FINA Short Course World Championships in Barcelona, Spain.

See JINNOBUKE on Page 19



Jinnosuke Suzuki in action in the men's 100m freestyle of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Monday in the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Asaka Litulumar prepares to swim in the women's 50m freestyle of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Monday in the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Part for the poster for Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay shows a file photo of retired KSPN sportscaster Bob Coldeen interviewing the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services team.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coldeen picks CLI for money raised from Christmas Island Relay

By **MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Retired sports broadcaster Bob Coldeen has chosen Center for Living Independently as the beneficiary of the funds raised from last Saturday's Annual Christmas Island Relay hosted by Northern Marianas Athletics.

"I'm honored by this gesture. I chose Center for Independent Living. I'm touched by the donation of those blessed and fortunate to be able to have an active



lifestyle and would like to help those in need. That center uses donations for direct assistance to their clients. This contribution will result in tangible benefits to them. The fortunate helping out the unfortunate matches the spirit of the Christmas season," Coldeen told *Saipan Tribune*.

Earlier, NMA secretary general Robin Sapong said letting Coldeen pick the local

charity that will receive the money raised from the sports organization's yearend event is a fitting tribute to the former KSPN sportscaster.

"The person we picked who will chose the local charity is someone who's been covering us and actually has brought sports alive in the CNMI and that's Mr. Bob Coldeen. He's retired so it's a way for us to say thank you and for supporting us for the past years. Whatever money we make

See COLDEEN on Page 19